

**THE DIALOGUES
OF LUCIAN**

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limited to two thousand copies.*



JUDGMENT OF PARIS

THE DIALOGUES *of* LUCIAN

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK
by
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NOW EDITED WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES AND
AN INTRODUCTION
by
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AND ILLUSTRATED WITH A SERIES
OF ORIGINAL DRAWINGS
by
BLANCH



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INTRODUCTION

IN attempting to sketch the life of Lucian we are wholly dependent, or very nearly so, on what he tells us himself. In some cases the autobiographical evidence is clear and un concealed, but in other cases it must be sought in the speeches or dialogues of certain characters in several of his works. Even then we are uncertain what allowance we must make for rhetorical decoration and satirical humour. Certain main facts, however, stand out in clear relief and form a framework which can be filled in very largely at the scholarly discretion of readers of his entire works.

For instance, we know from more than one source that Lucian was born at Samosata on the Euphrates, now the Kurdish village of Samsat lying between Aleppo and Diarbekr, somewhere about A.D. 125.

Thus he was a Syrian by birth, although Samosata had become a Greek city at an early date, being the capital of Kummukh, called Comma-gene by the Greeks. It did not become a Roman province till A.D. 72, when it received the additional name of Flavia.

It is necessary to bear these facts in mind when we come to consider Lucian as a satirist. He

was an Oriental, born and bred in a Greek city. He stood on the bridge that joined east to west, over which not only armies had marched, but by which had come the influx of tales and legends from Persia and India. Lucian heard some of them, and in later days we find them, or rather *motifs* from them, introduced into works like the *Vera Historia*.

He possessed in an astonishing degree the Oriental power of extravagant description and boundless imagination, and an appreciation of this fact is the key to all his satirical writings.

But it was a long time before Lucian turned to satirical dialogue, by which his name has lived. In his *Somnium*, known also as *Vita Luciani* owing to the fact that it is usually accepted as genuine autobiography, he tells us that as his father was by no means wealthy, he was anxious for his son to decide upon a profession that would prove lucrative, rather than that he should follow a life of culture which could only be enjoyed by the rich.

A surreptitious use of the wax scraped from his school tablets for the purposes of modelling, added to the fact that his uncle was a sculptor, soon decided the craft his parents considered Lucian most fitted for.

A broken plaque, an uncle's wrath, and the smart of a stick put an abrupt end to the apprenticeship. Then came the dream, or perhaps rather the allegory by which he tells us

of the struggle he had with himself before finally adopting rhetoric as his profession. Two women strove to possess Lucian, each pleading her cause in as persuasive a manner as possible. The first woman was Statuary, who, although coarse of dress and of slovenly appearance, promised him health and strength without the worry of having to leave home and travel abroad in search of a livelihood. The other woman was Learning,¹ who offered him knowledge and understanding, appreciation of the beautiful, good appearance, and the great gift of eloquence. Lucian's mind was soon made up in favour of Learning, whereupon he was carried through the air in a chariot whence he saw the blessings the earth derives from culture.

How his parents received the news of his decision we are not told, but it would hardly be guessing to infer that they were sadly disappointed, and after useless expostulation let him go his own way.

Owing to his poverty Lucian would have been unable to attach himself to any of the sophists who taught at Smyrna and Ephesus, but in all probability would at the first instance have soaked himself in the works of the ancient orators and historians. This would enable him

¹ I prefer this translation of *παιδεία*, to such renderings as "Literature," "Culture," or "Eloquence." The term is obviously intended to be general. The particular branch of *παιδεία* he first assayed was that of the *ῥήτωρ*.

to prepare speeches for clients, which work formed one of the branches of the art of the rhetorician. While still a youth he wandered about Ionia learning the rudiments of the profession he had chosen, perfecting his knowledge of Greek and gradually overcoming the disadvantages of his Syrian dialect and provincial manner. Whether he actually spoke in the courts or contented himself with writing speeches we do not know, but it seems likely that he tried his hand at everything in order to master his art as far as possible and make money. His efforts were attended with success. He soon wished to widen his sphere of activity, so he repaired to Greece, and later to Italy, where his success continued. As he tells us in *Nigrinus*, he visited Rome to see an oculist, but the outpouring of the philosophical genius of Nigrinus made him realise it was rather spiritual blindness he was suffering from. Lucian's apparent dislike of Latin and the ugly picture painted of Roman life by Nigrinus made him on the one hand take up the study of philosophy, and on the other hand leave Rome. This sudden interest in philosophy, as may be expected, was but short-lived. It was not long before our author returned to rhetoric, a much more paying proposition, and we soon find him in Gaul where he appears to have settled for some years, and to have accumulated quite a considerable amount of money.

This brings us roughly to A.D. 160 ; and very

shortly after this Lucian must have returned to Syria, for he wrote a panegyric on the mistress of Lucius Verus, whom he saw at Antioch during her visit in 162-63.

He now decided to travel with his father to Athens, in order to enjoy the charm, elegance and culture of the capital about which he had heard so much. Accordingly about A.D. 165 he started on his journey, but on the way occurred an event which might easily have ended his life.

He passed through Abonoteichos in Paphlagonia, celebrated at the time for the "cures" of the famous impostor Alexander. Lucian immediately saw through his trickery, and tried to expose him. An interview followed in which Lucian, instead of kissing his hand according to custom, bit it as hard as he could. Alexander, though suffering great pain, nursed his resentment, but secretly laid plans for revenge. Hardly had Lucian got on board when he noticed obvious distress on the part of the captain. On being pressed for an explanation he ultimately admitted that Alexander had hired him to throw him overboard during the voyage.

As Lucian had not yet turned his attention to dialogue, we may be especially grateful that his life was saved on this occasion.

And so, with his arrival in Athens, we come to the great turning-point in his career.

According to Lucian's own statement, it was not until he was forty years old that he left

rhetoric and took up dialogue, which latter was to become the medium through which his inimitable wit would scintillate and his religious scepticism be proclaimed by his holding up to ridicule the entire Greek pantheon.

Just as in his *Somnium* we have an allegorical account of his final decision to adopt a profession rather than a trade, so in his *Double Indictment* (*Bis accusatus*) we read of his reasons for abandoning rhetoric for dialogue. The piece contains other autobiographical matter and therefore is of additional value. At the command of Zeus (Jupiter), Hermes (Mercury) is holding a court of justice on Areopagus, with Justice herself presiding over the trials. Among the cases heard is a double one against "a Syrian" (*i.e.* Lucian). The first is brought by Rhetoric, who claims to have befriended the Syrian when he was a mere boy wandering about Ionia vainly trying to get a livelihood. As time went on he began to succeed. "I will say nothing of Greece and Ionia," says Rhetoric, "but on deciding to travel to Italy, I went by ship with him across the Ionian Sea, and attended him all the way to Gaul, where I helped him to acquire a very considerable income." Having become rich, the Syrian tired of his old love, and cast favourable glances in the direction of Dialogue in spite of her age. How can such base ingratitude be defended? In reply the Syrian admits the truth of Rhetoric's statement, but adds that the reason

of his leaving her was that she began to change considerably. Instead of wearing her usual sober and becoming dress she suddenly appeared with painted face and the jaunty air of a courtesan. The attentions of drunken lovers followed, until things reached such a pitch that the Syrian, driven from his house with disgust, sought lodging with his neighbour Dialogue. "Even supposing," he concludes, "that she could exonerate herself from these charges, surely no fault could be found with a man, close on forty, for withdrawing himself from the noise and bustle of the litigious bar, and instead of complaining in empty declamations of tyrants, or praising excellent men, prefers to frequent the Academy or the Lyceum. . . ."

And so we have Lucian's reasons for his abandoning of rhetoric for dialogue. They suffice as far as they go, but they do not go very far. It is fairly obvious that the real reason for his leaving rhetoric was that it could not serve as a medium for his inherent wit, imagination and scepticism. For years it had lain dormant, but now the eruption was at hand, and dialogue would serve as the vent-hole. In Lucian's time, however, the use of dialogue for this purpose was somewhat of an innovation if not of an impertinence, so in his *Bis accusatus* the second charge against "the Syrian" is made by Dialogue, who complains against the treatment he has received at his hands. From his lofty situa-

tion far above the clouds he has rudely been dragged till he stands on a level with the common people. His tragic mask has been pulled off and its place taken by a comic and satirical one. The venerable and the beautiful has been turned to ridicule and burlesque. In answer, the Syrian points out that when he first met Dialogue, he found him to be a melancholy personage, and much too dry for the public taste. It was necessary to wash him, to comb his hair, tidy him up generally and even make him smile. He was then introduced to Comedy, and merely nurses a grudge against the Syrian because he will no longer allow him to indulge in subtle Platonic questionings.

The Syrian, of course, wins both his cases.

In this allegory, then, we see the turning-point of Lucian's career, and, to a certain extent, the reasons for the change.

The actual order in which Lucian produced his dialogues is, of course, not known for certain. We shall not be able, however, to improve on the groups arranged by M. Croiset in his *Essai sur la vie et les œuvres de Lucien*, which still remains the chief source of our information.

Lucian's first assay was not in satirical dialogue, but dealt with commonplace subjects, such as friendship, art criticism, physical training, etc. To this group, then, belong *Pantomime*, *Anacharsis*, *Toxaris*, *Slander*, and *The Way to write History*. It was not until after his adieu

to philosophy, as demonstrated in his *Hermotimus*, that the satirical vein began to enter into Lucian's work ; we first see it in those writings inspired by the New Comedy, such as the *Liar* and *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, both excellent pieces in their way. Owing to the freedom in some of the dialogues in the latter, several translators have marked the work as spurious. Apart from other evidence to the contrary it would seem impossible for anyone not to see Lucian's hand in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*, which is as modern as any productions of the twentieth century and much wittier than most. Certain other erotic works, like the *Amores*, have also been attributed to Lucian. The present writer cannot find any evidence whatsoever in support of such a contention. The dialogue in question is merely immoral and futile, and just about as un-Lucianic as any work could be.

But to pass on to the next group, we now notice the influence of the Menippean satire taking effect and as a consequence some of the greatest of all Lucian's writings appeared, practically all of which are to be found in the present volume. They include : *The Dialogues of the Gods*, *The Dialogues of the Sea Gods*, *the Dialogues of the Dead*, *Menippus*, *Icaromarippus*, and *Zeus Cross-examined*.

In this group Croiset would also add the famous *True History*, but the exact position of this little masterpiece is very uncertain. An equally large

group followed—that founded on the Old Comedy—the satire of Aristophanes. To it we must assign *Charon*, *Timon*, *The Cock*, *Prometheus*, *Zeus Tragædus*, and *The Gods in Council*, apart from the dialogues satirising philosophy, such as *The Ship*, *The Runaways*, *The Fisher*, etc.

It will be unnecessary here for us to follow each remaining group, as we have now mentioned the most important writings, some of which are included in the present work.

About A.D. 175 Lucian appears to have rested from his labours, and to have enjoyed the culture and refinement of Athens as a private individual. It would also appear that in his declining years he became much poorer, for we find him turning once again to his old profession of rhetorician. He must, therefore, have welcomed the appointment by the Emperor Commodus to a legal post in Egypt, especially as he was able to do practically all the work involved by means of a deputy.

His end is uncertain, but from the fact that he suffered much from gout, and actually wrote a play on it in his old age, we are much more justified in imagining that it was this that finally carried him off than we are in believing with Suidas that he died of hydrophobia because of his hostility to the Christians !

Such a charge, apart from being quite unjust, was founded chiefly on spurious writings such as the *Philopatris*. Christianity clearly meant no more to him than did the whole Greek pantheon.

Although it is quite possible to point to various defects in Lucian as a writer—shallowness, superficiality and want of balance—we cannot deny him the position of being one of the wittiest and most readable classical writers whose works have come down to us.

It is hard to classify him in a single word—philosopher, satirist, agnostic, sceptic. He was all these, and something more. His self-imposed mission in life was to ask questions on everything he noticed around him, from a fly to a castrated Syrian priest. By the very asking of his questions, or perhaps only suggesting a query, he made men think for themselves. This was his epistle. Again and again we can imagine him saying, “Well now, these are the bare facts, why is it then that . . . ?”

Knowledge at any price was his motto, and he found satire one of the most powerful mediums through which to preach his creed. In such works as the *Dialogues of the Gods* his method was a clever use of *reductio ad absurdum*. He merely removed the tinsel from the picture and let the gods themselves show how petty and worldly all their quarrels and jealousies really were.

No comment would be needed. Zeus at home was a very different person from the mighty All-Father, the wielder of the dread thunderbolt. The matrimonial affairs of Olympus would make an earthly King's Proctor blush.

In considering the dialogues we must not forget that Lucian was a trained rhetorician, fully versed in the art of persuasion. This should not be counted against him, for it was a common practice to prepare defences for both sides of imaginary cases. Thus a clear-sighted analytical brain would result, leading quite naturally to dialogue as a medium of expression.

No writer shows more clearly than does Lucian how numerous can be the forms that dialogue can assume—from a chance conversation to a play—and at the beginning of each piece we are never sure what form it is going to take. It is this genius for versatility that helped so largely to immortalise his work.

Before closing this brief sketch of Lucian's life and writings, it is necessary to draw attention to his amazing literary achievement from a linguistic point of view. Here is a Syrian who not only rids himself of all traces of his foreign dialect, but writes perfect Greek, not of his own time, but of about six centuries previously. Fowler, in his excellent Introduction to his four-volume edition of *Lucian*, says: "The miracle may be repeated; an English-educated Hindu may produce masterpieces of Elizabethan English that will rank with Bacon and Ben Jonson; but it will surprise us when it does happen." It is a point well worth our notice.

In the present reprint of selected dialogues, the translation of Tooke has been preserved almost

unaltered. A few omitted passages have been restored from the original, and here and there an antiquated phrase has been changed. The Latin names of the gods and goddesses have also been kept. It has been thought desirable, however, to append a list of the original Greek equivalents.

Owing to the ease with which to-day one can turn up a classical dictionary, and to the innumerable books on mythology obtainable at every library, it has been considered quite unnecessary to reprint all Tooke's notes as they originally stood. These, therefore, have been drastically cut down, while, wherever necessary, references to modern works have been given.

N. M. PENZER

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*List of Latin Gods and Goddesses
with their original Greek equivalents*

BACCHUS .	.	.	DIONYSUS
CUPID .	.	.	EROS
DIANA .	.	.	ARTEMIS
HERCULES .	.	.	HERACLES
JUNO .	.	.	HERA
JUPITER .	.	.	ZEUS
LUCINA .	.	.	EILITHYIA
LUNA .	.	.	SELENE
MARS .	.	.	ARES
MERCURY .	.	.	HERMES
MINERVA .	.	.	ATHENA
NEPTUNE .	.	.	POSEIDON
NYMPHS .	.	.	MÆNADS
PARCÆ .	.	.	MÆRÆ
SATURN .	.	.	CRONUS
SOMNUS .	.	.	HYPNUS
VENUS .	.	.	APHRODITE
VULCAN .	.	.	HEPHÆSTUS

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PREFACE

THE pleasure which readers of every description, excepting only those who cannot bear a joke, still find in these Dialogues of Lucian, though to us they are no further interesting, than as antique gems and paintings from Herculaneum, enables us to judge of the extraordinary charms they must have had for the more refined class of our author's contemporaries, while the vulgar mass still believed in these deities. It was a no less happy than novel and daring thought, to make the gods converse, as it were, in their domestic capacity and undress, in moments of weakness, perplexity and collision of their frequently opposite demands and passions, when (not aware that they were privily overheard by men) they, in a manner ungodded themselves, and were exposed to the view of their besotted adorers in all their nakedness. Lucian could not have played the prevalent superstition a worse trick, and he was the more sure of not missing his aim, as he did not personally appear. For, as in these dramatical scenes the existence of the deities introduced and the historical truth of their romantic legends, are cordially admitted: it is therefore the gods that make themselves ridiculous, and against their knowledge and consent,

and with the most desirable success labour at the demolition of their own respect, since they shew themselves by their turpitudes, follies, extravagances and vices unworthy of the esteem and confidence of mankind.

The Grecian mythology provided our author with an inexhaustible fund of absurdities, inconsistencies and idle stories to that end. He had only the trouble of selection ; but he prudently confined himself to the most notorious, and entirely to such lineaments of the Olympic legends as had received a certain sanction either from the works of the most celebrated poets and artists, or the universal popular belief ; or from particular religious monuments, festivals or ceremonies in the several places and districts to which they referred.

It ought to be remarked to the honour of Lucian, that in so ticklish an undertaking, and with so many temptations to licentiousness (which some of our modern witlings would perhaps have found it no easy matter to resist) he holds in his wit and his imagination with a pretty tight rein. He never wrongs his deities ; he imputes nothing to them, which he cannot confirm by substantial evidence from their historians, or from the bards inspired by themselves, a Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus, and others. He charges them with no absurdities, that do not immediately arise from the contrast of their personal character with the decorum of their office, or their adventures and

exploits with nature, reason and morality, and therefore must be placed to their own, and not their painter's account. Upon the whole, he adheres, even in the fiction of minute features and circumstances, which the dramatic representation here and there obliges him to employ, so strictly to the rules of analogy and to his great prototype, the divine Homer, that I see not, what the whole clergy of all the twelve superior deities could in this respect have justly laid to his charge. His gods always speak so entirely in their own humour and manner, so unconstrained, naïve and conformably to their situations or their passions, that it nowhere appears to be Lucian's fault, if we are compelled to laugh at them. But very seldom, for instance on Jupiter's lying-in of the sons of Semele, does an Aristophanic wipe escape him ; but even these few, how harmless and chaste are they in comparison of the vile obscenities which the Attic *scurra* puts into the mouth of his Bacchus, to make the dregs of the Cecropian populace burst into fits of horse-laughter !

The mythology of the Greeks is as every one knows a real chaos, where all is confusion, nothing consistent. Not a single adventure, not a single act of their gods or the progeny of them, which is not by the several reporters quite differently related ; all, even their genealogy, is full of obscurity, perplexity and contradiction. In this however there were many things that might be allowed to pass current as the common or most

generally received tradition ; and this it is that everywhere lies at the bottom of the *Dialogues of the Gods*. About the origin of this tradition, about the foundation that these fables might have in geography, physics and astronomy, or in the primitive metaphorical language, or even (as, notwithstanding the several objections and arguments of the most recent interpreters of that problem, I am inclined to believe) in the most ancient history of that nation, composed of so many different tribes, and so diversely modified by the engrafting of Phœnician and Egyptian colonies—about the separation of this little historical gold from the baser metals, with which it was interspersed by time and principally by the poets—least of all however about the physical, political and moral truths which (after the example of Plato and other philosophers) in after ages pains had been taken to wash from this dross—about all this Lucian, in these *Dialogues of the Gods*, and his interpreters gave themselves as little concern as the great mass of the Greeks, who took the tradition of their gods and heroes, and all that Homer fables of them, in the literal sense, and left the allegorical as the pretended kernel of that shell, to be enucleated by the learned. This mystical interpretation of the mythology belongs not essentially to national religion ; in proportion however as illumination increased, the more necessary it became for those, whose interest it was to uphold paganism, now

sinking under the weight of its absurdity, to prevent its total downfall as long as possible : and it may upon good grounds be admitted, that our author, by the comic light in which he set the irrationality of the literally taken legends of the gods, indirectly contributed more than any other to promote the allegorical and mystical explanations, which subsequently came so much into the fashion.

If, for enabling us to judge the more equitably of the Grecian people, we look into our own bosoms, we shall pardon them a weakness which they had in common with every nation upon earth. Where is the people, in whose eyes the most incredible is not credible, the most absurd not venerable, whenever it is marked with the stamp of religion, or (what in effect is the same thing) of a religious superstition derived from ancestry ? And what a length of time elapsed, before even the most enlightened nations learnt to perceive, that religious nonsense was no less nonsense than any other !

Absurd therefore as it may appear to us, that the Grecian people ever should have literally believed in the miraculous birth of Minerva or of Bacchus, or any of the puerile tales that are ridiculed by Lucian in his *Dialogues of the Gods* : we can however as little deny, that there was a time, when almost the whole of Christendom literally believed the stories of the huge Christopher, and a hundred other equally credible

tales. Lucian therefore acted in a manner becoming a wise man, by ridiculing the fabulous records of the gods of his country. That he could venture to do it with impunity, proves indeed, that their authority was already in the wane : but if much faith in these objects had not still prevailed at that time among the unenlightened part of all classes, he would not certainly have made it so interesting a business to procure for sound reason such a complete and decisive triumph over those superstitions.

PROMETHEUS



PROMETHEUS:

MERCURY VULCAN PROMETHEUS

MERCURY. Here then is Caucasus, Vulcan, to which this unhappy Titan is to be nailed. Let us look round to see whether we can find some jutting rock, free from snow, that the chains may have a faster hold, and that the criminal may be conveniently seen.

VULCAN. So let us! For in a low situation, and lying near the ground he should not be

¹ This piece is not really one of the "Dialogues of the Gods," but the position assigned to it here by Tooke is quite justifiable, as it forms a kind of Introduction to the first Dialogue.

crucified, lest the men, who are his machinery, should come to his relief; but neither too high, as otherwise he cannot be viewed from below. If you think well of it, he shall be nailed here, about midway, over this precipice, with his arms extended on both sides.

MERCURY. Very well: the rocks are here broken, inaccessible, and on every side so steep, that it would be difficult to find a crevice, where to stick the point of one's foot in. Here will be the best place to fasten him crosswise. Therefore, no longer delay, Prometheus! Come up and be nailed to the rock!

PROMETHEUS. Have pity, good Vulcan and Mercury, on a poor unfortunate wretch, knowing as you do, that I have not merited these sufferings!

MERCURY. My good Prometheus, pity you! that is soon said; but we shall want pity too, if for not executing our commission we are crucified with you on the spot. Or do you think there is not room enough for a couple more to be riveted to it? Come, be quick; your right hand here! you, Vulcan, nail it down properly, and make the fastening good with heavy strokes of the hammer.—Now, the other hand!—Mind to make it fast!—Good! Presently the eagle will fly hither, to peck your liver, that you may receive the full recompense for your fine contrivances in the art of statuary.

PROMETHEUS. O Saturn, and Iapetus, and you,

O mother Earth, what am I, unfortunate wretch, doomed to suffer, though I have done no wrong !

MERCURY. You done no wrong ! You ! who in the first place, when you had the distribution of the meat, were so unjust and fraudulent as to keep the prime pieces for yourself, and put off Jupiter with the bones. I remember very well, by Jupiter, that Hesiod ¹ so relates the affair ! Next, you set yourself at work to make men ; a species of animals, calculated for all sorts of mischief, and capable of attempting every kind of wickedness ; and, what is worse, women. At last you robbed the gods even of their most valuable property, fire, and presented it to mankind. And one who has committed such prodigious enormities, has the impudence to say, he suffers innocently !

PROMETHEUS. I perceive, Mercury, that even you make light of accusing an innocent man (as the poet ² expresses himself), since you reproach me with things, for which, if I had justice done me, I should even be held worthy of an honourable remuneration ³ from the public. If you have time, I should be glad to repel these accusations, by proving to you, that Jupiter has past an unjust sentence upon me ; but you, who are

¹ In the *Theogony*, ver. 535 *et seq.*

² *Iliad*, xiii. 775.

³ Literally, “ of free-table in the Prytaneon.” This latter was the name of a square in Athens, where several public buildings stood together, particularly that where the Prytanes, or the senate, held their meetings.

known to be a fine speaker and a cunning advocate might take upon you to justify him, by shewing that he has done right, in having me crucified here on Caucasus, near the straits of the Caspian, as a miserable spectacle to all Scythia.

MERCURY. The dispute to which you challenge me, Prometheus, could be of no service to you ; speak however if you are so inclined ; I must at any rate tarry here a little, till the eagle comes, who has charge of your liver. In the meantime we can do nothing better than spend our leisure in listening to a sophistical declamation, such as may be expected from such an excellent master in the art.

PROMETHEUS. Do you speak first then ; and in your accusation do not spare me, and leave no argument untried in vindication of your father. Vulcan, I pray you be the judge between us.

VULCAN. By Jupiter ! instead of being the judge, I shall perhaps be a second accuser, as it was your fault that my victuals were cold when you purloined the fire from us.

PROMETHEUS. Very well then, divide the accusation between you : you speak of the theft, and Mercury of the man-making and the meat-distributing. For you are both virtuosos and look as if you were famous orators.

VULCAN. Mercury may at the same time speak for me. Law-suits are not my affair. My busi-

ness is transacted at the forge. But he there is an orator, and mightily addicted to such things.

PROMETHEUS. Only I imagine that Mercury would not choose to speak about theft, and bring me in guilty of a crime, in which I was no more than a brother-tradesman with him. However, if you think proper to enter upon it, O son of Maia, now is the time to lay your indictment.

MERCURY. [*Declaiming.*] It would certainly, O Prometheus, require a long and studied harangue, were I to speak of your offences as they deserve. However, summarily to indicate them may for the present suffice. First then, when it was your duty in virtue of your office to attend to the distribution of the meat, you kept the finest pieces for yourself, and defrauded the king. Secondly, you unnecessarily and contrary to all propriety fashioned men; and thirdly, stole fire from us, in order to give it to them: all crimes of such magnitude, that instead of complaining, you have great cause to acknowledge the excessive philanthropy of Jupiter in the lenity of your punishment. If now you deny that you have perpetrated these crimes, I shall be reduced to the necessity of convincing you by a long and elaborate oration, and setting the truth in the fairest possible light. If you plead guilty to the three charges aforesaid; my accusation is at an end, and it would only be loss of time to expatiate further upon it.

PROMETHEUS. Whether all that you have advanced, Mercury, be not trifling, will be presently seen. I will therefore, if that, as you say, is sufficient to my accusation, do my utmost to try whether I cannot repel those charges.¹ In the first place, then hear what I have to allege concerning the meat-distribution. And here, true so help me Uranus ! it shames me to the heart for Jupiter, that he should be so mean-spirited, and capable of such pitiful spite, on account of a little bit of bone that he found in his share, as to cause such an old god as I am to be crucified, without recollecting the important services that I afforded him, and without considering that it is only befitting a little boy to fret and fume, because he has not the biggest piece. Methinks, Mercury, for such insignificant tricks that are played at a feast, a man should have no place in his memory at all ; but supposing that one of the guests in a merry mood had exceeded a little, should take it for a joke, and on rising from table, leave it behind him entirely ; but to retain the grudge till the following day, and nourish a slight frolic into a serious injury, and bear it in mind to revenge it on a future occasion, —for shame ! that is neither kingly nor like a

¹ In the original Mercury here repeats, in imitation of the formalities of the Athenian style of pleading, the points of accusation word for word ; an accuracy which the reader will readily release us from : especially as we have already heard the accusation twice from Mercury's own mouth.

god. For, take away cracking of jokes, playing of tricks, jeers, sarcastic humour, and comical sallies, and it were not allowed to interchange these jocularities, to laugh at one another and sport these waggeries ; what would remain but a silent meeting, making faces, and from mere ennui, guzzling and surfeiting, by which the entertainment would not be much improved ? Nothing therefore was further from my thoughts, than that Jupiter would remember this joke the next day, much less that he would be so choleric about it, or take matters so heinously, if, in the division of some roast-meat, he had been a little overreached, to make trial whether he knew how to choose the best pieces. Put the case now, Mercury, that I had not merely presented Jupiter with the worst part, but had cheated him out of all ; was it worth his while, as the saying is, to throw heaven and earth into confusion, and talk of nothing but chains and crosses, and bring Caucasus into play, and send down an eagle to devour my liver ? Ask yourself, whether such revenge does not betray a little, narrow, groveling mind, that has no command over the passions ? For, if on account of a few morsels of beef, he can put himself into such a monstrous fury, what would he do if he lost a whole ox ? How much more discreetly do men act in such cases, with whom there would be less impropriety in giving way to anger and resentment, than with the gods ! For never did any one of them crucify

his cook for dipping his finger into the fleshpot, and tasting the broth,¹ or for cutting off a slice from the spit, and gulping it down : but rather pardoned him, or at most let him escape with only a box on the ear, or a slap on the face. But that any one was ever crucified for such an offence, is a thing unheard of. And so much for the first point. I am ashamed to be obliged to answer such accusations, but certainly he has more cause to blush who brought them !

I come now to the second head, namely, that I made men ; which, as it seems naturally to split in two, I know not rightly which of them you lay most stress upon. If you are of opinion that men ought not to have been made at all, but should have still lain unformed lifeless clay, as they were before ; or whether I ought to have framed them differently, and not after this model ? However I will reply to both : endeavouring first to prove that, by the calling forth of men into life not the slightest injury accrues to the gods, but on the contrary it is far more convenient to them, than if the earth had remained unpeopled. Now to enable you to judge, whether I have done wrong in embellishing the earth with this new species of beings, you have only to cast a glance upon the times, when, excepting the gods and the celestial beings,² nothing alive was in existence. The earth was then a rude, shapeless, dreary wilderness, over-

¹ Cf. *Hor. Sat.* i. 3. ver. 80.

² The stars.

grown and encumbered with forests. The gods had neither altars nor temples ; and how could then magnificent columns, marble statues and the like be produced, which are now met with everywhere sculptured with the nicest art ? I therefore, always studious for the common good, and intent upon devising means whereby the interest of the gods may be promoted, and in general how all may be carried to greater perfection, considered with myself, that I could do nothing better than take a little clay and mould it into animals in figure resembling us gods. For I thought there was somewhat deficient to the divine natures, while there were not mortal beings, with whom they might contrast themselves, and thereby be more sensible to their own advantages. This new race was to be mortal, but for the rest endowed with as much ingenuity, intelligence and taste for beauty as was in my power to bestow. I accordingly, to speak in the words of the poet,¹ made dough of earth and water, kneaded it properly, and by the aid of Minerva, whom I had implored to befriend me in my work, made man of it. And that now is the grand crime that I have committed against the gods ! A great harm verily is in my making living things of clay, and having set in motion what till then had lain as a dead mass ! The gods are now probably less gods than before,

¹ Alluding to an expression, made use of by Hesiod, *Oper. et Dies.* ver. 61, in describing how Vulcan formed Pandora.

since the world has been peopled with some mortal animals? At least one should conclude from Jupiter's displeasure at me, the condition of the immortals must be greatly deteriorated by the origination of man: he was afraid, I suppose, lest they also should raise a rebellion against him, and like the giants make war upon the gods. That however from me and my works not the slightest harm has accrued to you, is obvious; or shew me, Mercury, only one instance, however small, I will be silent, and thereby confess that I do not suffer too much from you. But to convince you how beneficial they have been to the gods, cast a look upon the earth, which formerly was so rude and deformed, and behold it adorned with cities and cultivated fields and elegant plantations, the sea covered with ships, the islands inhabited, and everywhere altars and sacrifices and temples and festive assemblies, and all the public ways and markets full of Jupiter. Had I made men only for myself, and kept them for my sole use, I might have been upbraided with avarice and covetousness: thus however I bequeathed them to you gods as a common possession; aye more, the altars of Jupiter, Apollo and yours, Mercury, are everywhere seen, an altar of Prometheus nowhere,¹ as a manifest proof how I have sought my own, and am betraying the general interest, and bringing it into declension! Besides, Mer-

¹ Yet *cf.* Pausanias, i. xxx. (Frazer, ii. 391).

cury, consider only this : whether any work or possession ; which is admired by nobody, is as desirable and pleasant as when you are able to shew it to others. The application is easily made. Had I not formed men, the beauty of the universe had lacked witnesses, we should have possessed immense wealth, neither admired by others nor at length valued by ourselves. For what should we compare it to, in order to feel how much happier we are, if we could find no beings to whom fate had denied our advantages ? Magnitude only then appears great when it is measured with something less. And you, instead of honouring me as you ought for so useful an invention, have in gratitude for it crucified me ! But, I hear you say, there are among men heinous malefactors, adulterers, insurgents in arms against one another, marriages with own sisters and assassins of their fathers ?—As if all this did not happen among the gods every day ! And yet nobody imputes it as a crime to Heaven and Earth for having set us up. You might even say : the care for them gives us a great deal to do. But with just as much reason might the shepherd complain that he has a flock, because he must take care of it. It is indeed attended with labour, but likewise pleasure ; and thus providence procures us certainly no disagreeable entertainment. Or what should we do, if we had nobody to take care of ? Sit idle, and do nothing but quaff our nectar, and from

sheer irksomeness surfeit ourselves with ambrosia. But what vexes me most is, that in my manufacture you inveigh loudest against me for making women, and yet are such great admirers of them, that you ever and anon go down, and sometimes as bulls, sometimes as satyrs or swans, do them the honour to produce gods by them. Perhaps however you will object that men might always have been made, only upon another model than that of yours. But whence could I have obtained a goodlier than the most perfect of all forms? Or should I have made them irrational, brutal field animals? How would they then have sacrificed to you gods, or otherwise given you due honour? Nevertheless it is very delightful to you, and you are not long in considering whether the voyage across the ocean to the faultless Ethiopians is too arduous an undertaking, if only hecatombs are given to feast you.¹ And me, who have procured you all these homages and sacrifices, me you have sentenced to be crucified!

Let this suffice on the article concerning men. I proceed therefore now, with your permission, to the flagrant fire-robbery. And here tell me, for all the gods' sake, what deficiency do we feel of this fire, since the men have got some of it? You will not pretend any whit: for it is, methinks,

¹ Homer causes Jupiter with his whole court to make this voyage on a visit of a few days to these hospitable Ethiopians. *Iliad*, i. 423.

the nature of this element not to decrease by communication ; it is not extinguished by the kindling of another by it. It is therefore gross, palpable envy, if you will not endure, that without the smallest detriment to you, any should be given to others who are in want of it : and, by reason that you are gods, you should be the liberal dispensers of every blessing, and far above all grudging and discontent ! But if, after all, I had carried off the whole of your fire, and left you absolutely none of it, what damage would it have been to you ? For of what use is fire to you, seeing you are not cold, eat your ambrosia without boiling, and never want candles ? Whereas to men, fire is indispensably necessary for numberless purposes, and especially for sacrifices ; for how without fire would they perfume the highways with the greasy steam of victims, burn their incense, and roast joints of beef upon the altars, of which you are all such great lovers, that you reckon it the most delicious treat when the odours of these oblations ascend in thick spiral clouds of smoke ? You therefore act repugnant to your own pleasure, by bringing this charge against me. Besides, I wonder much, that you have not forbid the sun to shine upon the men, seeing his fire is indisputably more divine and more fire than the common ; or why you neglect to cite him before the tribunal for wasting your property ! My defence is now finished ; but I would have you, Mercury and

Vulcan, if you believe that in one or another particular I have spoke amiss, to correct and refute me : I shall then know how to make a second reply.

MERCURY. It is no easy matter, Prometheus, to wrestle with such a powerful sophist as you are. Besides, you may be glad that you had not Jupiter for a hearer : I am certain, that he would have sent you sixteen vultures instead of one to devour your entrails ; so vehemently did you accuse him, while you appeared to be only defending yourself. One thing is however marvellous to me ; that you being a prophet should not have foreseen the punishment that awaited you.

PROMETHEUS. I knew it very well, and knew likewise that my torments would come to an end, and that ere long a friend of yours¹ shall come from Thebes, and shall shoot the eagle with his arrows, that you say is to alight and fasten on me.

MERCURY. May that prove true, and I shortly have the pleasure of seeing you free again, and sitting at our divine board ! Only not to have the office of distributer of the portions !

PROMETHEUS. Make yourself easy upon that matter, Mercury ; I shall once more carouse with you, and Jupiter, in return for no small service, will release me.

MERCURY. May one ask, what sort of one ?

¹ Hercules.

PROMETHEUS. You know Thetis, Mercury.—But it is not now time to say more. I must reserve my secret for my ransom.

MERCURY. Keep it close, Titan, if it will be of service to you. Let us now depart, Vulcan ; for yonder I see the eagle flying this way.—Hold out bravely ; and may the Theban you talk of presently appear to deliver you from the beak of this ravenous bird.

DIALOGUES OF THE GODS



DIALOGUES OF THE GODS

LIBERATION OF PROMETHEUS

PROMETHEUS JUPITER

PROMETHEUS. Let me loose, Jupiter ; you have excruciated me long and miserably enough !

JUPITER. I let you loose ! you, who would have been punished with too much lenity, if I had loaded you with three times as heavy chains, and thrown all Caucasus on your head ! You, who, if you were to be punished according to your

deserts, sixteen vultures, instead of one, should not only prey upon your liver, but peck out your eyes, for having put into the world such an absurd sort of animals as men, stole fire from heaven, and, what is worse than all, formed women ! For, how you cheated me in the division of the meat-offering, by giving me nothing but bones covered with fat, and keeping the best for yourself, I shall not now mention.

PROMETHEUS. Have not I been sufficiently punished for it, chained as I have been so many thousand years on Caucasus, and forced to feed this damned eagle with my liver ?

JUPITER. Yet it bears no proportion to what you deserve to suffer.

PROMETHEUS. I do not ask you to give me my liberty for nothing, Jupiter ; I will disclose something to you for it that is of the utmost consequence to you.

JUPITER. This is one of your cajoleries, Prometheus.

PROMETHEUS. What should I get by it, if it were ? You would certainly not forget where Caucasus stands, and will be in no want of fetters, if it turns out that I impose upon you.

JUPITER. First I would fain know what the mighty disclosure is that merits such a favour.

PROMETHEUS. If I tell you whither you are now going, and what you propose, will you then believe what I shall predict ?

JUPITER. How can I help it ?

PROMETHEUS. You are hasting to Thetis, to start an intrigue with her.

JUPITER. You have hit it ! But what besides ? I am half inclined to believe that you will tell the truth.

PROMETHEUS. Have nothing to do with that Nereid ! For should she prove pregnant, you may expect that the son she will bring forth will deal by you as you dealt by . . .¹

JUPITER. That is as much as to say he will dethrone me ?

PROMETHEUS. Far be it, O Jupiter ! But that the connexion you propose with her threatens it, is certain.

JUPITER. At that price, thanks for your kindness. Lovely Thetis, farewell !—Vulcan shall set you at liberty for this caution.

II

JUPITER'S COMPLAINTS AGAINST CUPID

JUPITER CUPID

CUPID. If I have done wrong, forgive me ; I am but a simple child.

JUPITER. You a child ; and yet older than Iapetus !² How ! because you have neither a

¹ But for Jupiter's interruption Prometheus would have added "Cronos and Rhea." See *Ov. Met.* xi. 221-28.

² That is, according to the celestial genealogy of Hesiod, whereby Cupid is as old as Chaos and the Earth, the mother

beard nor a grey head, you would fain pass for a boy ; and yet are so old and full of roguery !

CUPID. But old as you say I am, what harm have I done you, that you threaten to chain me ?

JUPITER. Is it a trifling matter then, you graceless booby, merely from perverseness and for your own diversion to have made all manner of things of me ? Is not it entirely owing to you, that not a single mortal has an affection for me ; so that I am at a loss what to employ against them but magic, and must turn myself into a satyr, into a bull, into an eagle, and into a golden shower,¹ if I would come at them. And what do I gain by it ? They love the bull or the swan ; but die with fright when I appear in my proper shape.

CUPID. That is very natural : how, being only mortals, should they be able to bear the sight of Jupiter ?

JUPITER. How comes it then to pass that Apollo won the affection of Branchus² and Hyacinthus ?

of Iapetus and the other Titans, of whom Cronos or Saturn, Jupiter's father, was the youngest.

¹ Into a bull with Europa, into a satyr with Antiope, into a swan with Leda, into a golden shower with Danae. He might have considerably increased the catalogue ; for, besides the aforesaid fair ones, he deluded Io as a cloud, Calisto as Diana, Ægina as fire, Mnemosyne as a shepherd, Clytoria as an ant, Asteria as an eagle, his sister and subsequent wife Juno as a lapwing, and Alcmene in the form of her own husband.

² The Branchidæ were guardians of the oracle of Apollo at Miletus, Branchus being Apollo's son by a lady of Miletus.

CUPID. Daphne however ran away from him, notwithstanding he had a smooth chin and the finest head of hair in the world. If you would be loved, lay aside your lightning and that formidable ægis, make yourself as agreeable as possible, let your locks be neatly combed out, flowing in graceful ringlets on either side, ornamented with a golden fillet, put on an elegant purple vest and half-boots of gilt leather; let pipes and drums go before you; and see then whether you will not have a fairer train of Mænads than even Bacchus himself.

JUPITER. Get away with your nonsensical advice! I have no desire to be amiable at that price.

CUPID. Then neither should you desire to play the lover. That would be no hard matter.

JUPITER. Hard or not, the pleasure of love I will not renounce; I desire it to cost only little trouble. To bring that about is your affair, and on that condition you shall be pardoned for this once.

III

10

JUPITER MERCURY

JUPITER. Mercury!

MERCURY. What are your commands, my honoured father?

JUPITER. You know the fair daughter of Inachus?

MERCURY. Io you mean ? Oh yes.

JUPITER. Can you imagine that the poor thing is turned into a cow ?

MERCURY. Can it be true ! How came she to be so transfigured ?

JUPITER. To such a jealous wife as Juno everything is possible ; but she has played the unfortunate creature a still worse trick : she has given her to the keeping of a certain many-eyed cow-herd, named Argus, a fellow who knows not what it is to sleep.

MERCURY. What is to be done ?

JUPITER. Nothing, but that you fly down to Nemea, kill Argus, carry off Io into Egypt and make Isis of her.¹ There she shall henceforth be worshipped as a goddess, preside over the inundations of the Nile, and grant favourable winds to the mariners, and be their tutelar deity.

¹ Apollodorus, ii. 1, § 3. It was a whim of the Greeks, particularly after a Grecian family had taken possession of the throne of Egypt, to confound and mingle their native mythology with the Egyptian. For in fact the Isis of the Egyptians and the daughter of Inachus had nothing in common.

For numerous references see Frazer's edition of *Apollodorus* (Loeb Classics), Vol. i., pp. 130-35.

IV

GANYMEDE

JUPITER GANYMEDE

JUPITER. Now, my dear Ganymede, we are come to our journey's end. Kiss me, you fine little fellow ; there, you see I have no crooked beak now, no sharp claws and no wings, as it appeared to you, when you took me for a bird.

GANYMEDE. How, man, you were not then the eagle that a little while ago came flying down and carried me away from the midst of my flock ? Where did you then get your wings, and why do you look quite different now ?

JUPITER. That is, my brave boy, because I am neither a man nor an eagle, but the king of the gods, who only put on the form of an eagle, because it was convenient for his design.

GANYMEDE. What do you say ! Then you are Pan, of whom I have heard so much ? But where is your pipe ? and why have you no horns and no goat's feet ?

JUPITER. Do you think then that there are no gods but him ?

GANYMEDE. In our village we know of no other ; therefore we sacrifice to him a whole he-goat before the cave where his image stands. May be, you are one of those bad men who steal folks, and then sell them for slaves !

JUPITER. Tell me, have you never heard talk of

Jupiter, and never seen on the top of Ida ¹ the altar of the god who sends rain and lightning and thunder ?

GANYMEDE. You were then the fine gentleman that lately pelted us so terribly with hailstones ; who, as they say, lives up in the sky, and who makes such a clattering among the clouds, and to whom my father a few days ago sacrificed a ram ? —But what have I done, that you should thus fly away with me, O king of the gods ! My sheep will be all this while running wild, and are perhaps already worried and torn by the wolves.

JUPITER. Why should you trouble yourself about the sheep ? You are now immortal, and will stay with us.

GANYMEDE. What, then you will not carry me back to-day to Ida ?

JUPITER. Certainly not. To what purpose did I turn myself from a god into an eagle ?

GANYMEDE. But then my father will be angry with me, if he cannot find me anywhere, and I shall be beat for having left my sheep.

JUPITER. He shall not see you again.

GANYMEDE. No, no ; I will return to my father !—[*Coaxing.*] If you will carry me back, I promise you, he shall sacrifice to you another ram ; the big three-year-old one, that always goes at the head of the flock when I drive them to the meadow.

¹ Named Gargarus. See Dial. xx. Homer often places Jupiter at Gargarus on Ida. *Iliad*, viii. 47.

JUPITER. [*Aside.*] How simple and ingenuous the boy is ! a perfect child !—My dear Ganymede, you must drive all these things out of your head, and think no more about Ida and your flock. You are now an inmate of heaven, and will henceforth be able to do much good to your father and to your country. Instead of milk and cheese you will eat ambrosia and drink nectar. You shall be my cupbearer ; and what is better, you will be no longer a man, but an immortal ; and a star of your name shall sparkle in the sky ; in short, you will be quite happy.

GANYMEDE. But when I want to play who will be my playfellow ? On Ida I had a great many boys of my own age.

JUPITER. You will be in no want of them here ; I will give you a quantity of fine playthings, and Cupid shall be your playfellow. Only take heart, my boy ! put on a cheerful face, and never fret about things below.

GANYMEDE. But of what service can I be to you here ? Shall I have some sheep here to look after ?

JUPITER. Not at all. You will hand us the nectar, and wait at table.

GANYMEDE. There is no difficulty in that ; I understand very well how to serve out the milk and to hand round the ivy-cup.

JUPITER. That you cannot yet forget the shepherds ! You are here in heaven, I tell you, and we gods drink nothing but nectar.

GANYMEDE. Does that taste better than milk ?

JUPITER. When you have tasted only one drop of it, you will no more wish for milk.

GANYMEDE. But where am I to sleep of nights ? With my companion Cupid ?

JUPITER. Little blockhead, I brought you away that you may sleep with me.

GANYMEDE. You cannot then sleep alone, and imagine that you shall sleep sounder if you lie with me ?

JUPITER. With such a pretty boy as you, certainly.

GANYMEDE. What has prettiness to do with sleeping ?

JUPITER. Oh, it has something delightful in it, and makes one sleep softer !

GANYMEDE. My father talked quite differently. He was always kept awake by me when I lay with him ; and complained in the morning that I was always tossing about, and rolling this way and that, and kicked him, or cried out in my sleep, so that he could get no rest for me ; and therefore generally sent me to bed with my mother. If you therefore stole me for that, you can at any time carry me back to the earth ; for I shall be very troublesome to you, because I turn so often.

JUPITER. So much the better—because I shall keep awake too, kissing and hugging you.

GANYMEDE. That may be ; but while you're kissing me I'll go off to sleep.

JUPITER. We shall see what is to be done. In

the meantime do you, Mercury, take him away for the present, and let him quaff the draught of immortality. Then shew him how he must hand the goblet with propriety, and bring him back that he may enter on his office at table.

V

A CONJUGAL ALTERCATION BETWEEN
JUPITER AND HIS CONSORT

JUNO JUPITER GANYMEDE, *as a Mute*

JUNO. Since you stole and brought up that Phrygian boy there from Ida, I find you grown very cold towards me, Jupiter.

JUPITER. You are jealous then of that simple, harmless lad. I thought it was the women and girls who stand well with me, that made you so cross.

JUNO. It is in truth not handsome of you, and but ill befits the dignity of the monarch of the gods, to neglect your lawful wife, and carry on your intrigues below, rambling about the earth in the shape of a swan, or a bull, or a satyr. The creatures however stay in the place they belong to, but this shepherd-boy, to the disgrace of your divine majesty, you have even fetched up into heaven, and settled him here before my face, under pretext of handing you the nectar; as if you were at a loss for a cupbearer, and Hebe

or Vulcan were no longer able to undergo the fatigues of so arduous an office ! But indeed you never take the goblet from his hand, but you give him a kiss before the eyes of us all, which tastes to you sweeter than the nectar, so that you are every moment asking for drink, though you are not thirsty ; you even carry it so far, that when you have only drunk a little, you hand the cup to the boy and make him drink, that you may gulp down what he leaves, as somewhat peculiarly delicious ; putting always that part of the brim to your mouth which he has touched with his lips, that you may have the pleasure of drinking and kissing at once. And did not you the other day lay aside your ægis and your thunderbolt, in despite of your dignity and your great long beard, to sit down on the ground and play with him ? Do not imagine that you manage your matters so secretly as to escape observation ; I see it all perfectly well.

JUPITER. And where is the harm of all this, my lady wife, if, to procure myself a double pleasure in my cups, I kiss such a pretty boy ? If I allowed him only once to kiss you, you would not find fault with me, but would be very well content, and prefer his kiss to the nectar.

JUNO. That is not talking as becomes you, Jupiter ! So far I hope never to proceed in condescension, as to let my lips be contaminated by a Phrygian shepherd-boy, and such an effeminate stripling too !

JUPITER. Moderate your expressions, madam—this effeminate stripling, this Phrygian shepherd-boy, this delicate youth—however I had best say no more, lest I overheat myself.

JUNO. Oh, for anything I have to object, you may even be wedded to him ! I only said it, to put you in mind of the improprieties you force me to endure on account of your cupbearer.

JUPITER. So ! Your delicate son, Vulcan, smutty and begrimed with coal-dust, as he comes from his forge at Lemnos, should therefore limp about the celestial table and serve us out the wine ? From such fingers you think we ought to take the cup, and be glad of it ? solace ourselves with his sooty kisses, with which you yourself are disgusted, though you are his mother ? That would be delightful ! that would be a cupbearer highly ornamental to the celestial table ! Ganymede must be sent back to Ida ; for he is cleanly, and has rosy fingers, and hands the goblet with a grace ; and, what vexes you the most, kisses sweeter than nectar !

JUNO. It is only since mount Ida has brought up for us this fine curly-pated rustic, that Vulcan is all at once become crippled, and powdered over with ashes, and so shocking a sight to you ! Formerly you saw nothing of all this, and neither his soot nor his forge prevented you from relishing the nectar presented you from his hands.

JUPITER. Dear Juno, you vex only yourself ; that is all that you get by your jealousy ; for

my love is only strained the higher for it. If, however, it is disagreeable to you to take your cup from the hand of a beautiful boy, then let it be presented to you by your son, and you, Ganymede, shall for the future wait upon me alone ; and at every cup kiss me twice, when you hand it to me, and when you receive it back. —How ? Why do you cry, child ? Fear nothing ; whoever affronts you shall suffer for it !

VI

IXION

JUNO JUPITER

JUNO. This Ixion, to whom you have granted such free admittance to us, Jupiter ; what kind of a man do you think he is ?

JUPITER. A very fine fellow, Juno my love, and an agreeable table-companion. Should I have invited him to my board, unless I thought him worthy of it ?

JUNO. He is however unworthy of being admitted, and ought no longer to be endured.

JUPITER. What has he done that is improper ?

JUNO. What has he done ? It is so bad that I am ashamed to tell you.

JUPITER. So much the less ought you to conceal it from me, if what he has committed is so scandalous. Has he presumed to attempt one

of our goddesses ? For I perceive by your hesitation, that it will turn out to be something of that nature.

JUNO. Me myself, and no other, Jupiter, and that already for a long time. At first I could not comprehend why he stared so perpetually at me ; sometimes he would sigh, and had at the same time his eyes full of water. When I gave the cup to Ganymede to fill, he would secretly ask to drink out of the same cup, and when he had got it, he kissed it, held it before his eyes, leering all the while at me. Now I began to perceive, that by this means he wanted to give me to understand that he was in love with me : but shame always withheld me from saying anything of it to you, and I likewise hoped that the man would at last recover from his frenzy. Since however he has had the presumption to make me a verbal declaration, I have left him lying on the floor, where he had cast himself weeping before me, stopped my ears, that I might not hear the insolent request he presented at my feet, and am come hither to communicate it to you. It behoves you to consider what revenge on the man it is proper for you to take.

JUPITER. The wicked scoundrel ! What ! to attack me myself, and that on the most sensible side ! Possibly the nectar may have intoxicated him to that pitch.—But indeed we ourselves are to blame, and manifestly carry our philanthropy too far, in admitting these mortals to eat and

drink with us. Surely it is pardonable in them, if drinking such wine as ours, and gazing at those celestial beauties, such as never appeared to them on earth, they are charmed out of their wits by love, and smit with the avidity to possess them. For Cupid is an outrageous tyrant, and exercises his sway not only as the master of men, but sometimes even of us gods.

JUNO. Of you indeed he is the unlimited master, pulls you by the nose, to use the vulgar expression, leading you wherever he will, without even the slightest resistance ; in short, you are in the strictest sense Cupid's property and plaything. I likewise very well know why you can so easily forgive Ixion at present. You doubtless remember that you are still in his debt, and that his reputed son Pirithous is the fruit of your quondam familiarity with his wife.¹

JUPITER. [*Smiling.*] You still recollect the little pastime I formerly took upon the earth there below ?—But now shall I tell you what we intend to do with Ixion ? To punish him by chasing him from our table, would in fact be too severe, since the poor fellow is desperately in love, and, as you say, suffers so miserably with it that he constantly sheds tears.

JUNO. And what then ?—You are surely not capable of making an offensive proposal to your own wife ?

JUPITER. By no means. I will take a cloud,

¹ Dia, the daughter of Hesioneus or Deioneus.

and make it into a sort of living figure, that shall look so like you as if it were yourself ; and when we get up from table, I will, while he is tossing about (as is the way with unsuccessful lovers) in anxious sleeplessness, upon his couch, lay the cloudy figure by him. This, without derogation from your virtue, will cure him of his love-sickness, and what can you require more ?

JUNO. A pleasant conceit ! So then, instead of the punishment his audacious passion deserves, he is to be rewarded for it !

JUPITER. Permit it however. What harm can it do to you, if Ixion embraces a cloud ?

JUNO. But he will take the cloud for me, and so it will be just as much as if he had dishonoured me.

JUPITER. This is mere cavilling. The cloud will never be Juno, nor you be the cloud : only Ixion will be cheated ; that is the whole affair.

JUNO. Yet, as men are indelicate creatures, on his return to the earth he may be proud of it, and boast to his companions of having succeeded with Juno, and shared Jupiter's bed ; aye, he will make no scruple to say that I love him, and people will believe him, because they cannot know that it was only a cloud.

JUPITER. I could tell him another story ! If he dares to say anything of it he shall not go unrequited for it ! For I will hurl him down into Tartarus, where I will have him bound upon a wheel, and the poor devil shall be whirled round

and round for ever on it, and by this incessant torture atone for his presumptuous amour !

JUNO. At least it would not be too much for such arrogant boasting.

VII

MERCURY'S INFANCY AND EARLY TALENTS

APOLLO VULCAN

VULCAN. Have you seen the new-born son of Maia,¹ how pretty he is, and archly laughs at everybody. It is still but a baby, yet has every possible appearance that something excellent must come of him.

APOLLO. What shall I anticipate of a child, Vulcan ? or what good expect of him who in mischief is already much older than Iapetus ?

VULCAN. How can a child scarcely come into the world be able to do mischief ?

APOLLO. Ask Neptune, whom he robbed of his trident, or Mars, whose sword he privily stole out of the scabbard ; not to say that he filched my bow and arrows.

¹ Mercury, Jupiter's son by Maia, the Titan Atlas's daughter. His various talents, which form the topic of this conversation, made him the tutelary deity of thieves, merchants, orators, wrestlers, and musicians, the conductor of souls into and out of Tartarus, and the herald and messenger of the gods. Compare with this dialogue Homer's hymn to Mercury.

VULCAN. A new-born babe, that can scarcely stir in his swaddling clothes !

APOLLO. You will soon have proof of it, whenever he comes to you.

VULCAN. He has been to me already.

APOLLO. And are none of your implements carried off ? Is everything there ?

VULCAN. Everything, Apollo.

APOLLO. Look narrowly.

VULCAN. By Jupiter ! I miss my tongs.

APOLLO. You will infallibly find them in the little one's cradle.

VULCAN. He is so nimble-fingered that he must have already learnt the art of stealing in his mother's womb.

APOLLO. And have not you heard how cleverly he harangues, and how glibly his tongue runs ? He has already a mind to be our page. And, would you think it, no longer ago than yesterday he gave a challenge to Cupid ; and in an instant, somehow or other, tripped up his heels and laid him sprawling on the ground. And as we all applauded him for his victory, while Venus took him up in her arms and kissed him, he stole her girdle and Jupiter's sceptre ; and if the thunder-bolt had not been too heavy and too hot, he would have run away with that also.

VULCAN. A notable youngster indeed !

APOLLO. And what is more, he is a musician too.

VULCAN. How do you make that out ?

APOLLO. He found a dead tortoise somewhere.

He immediately made an instrument of the shell ; fitting pins to it, with a neck and keys and bars, and straining to it seven strings, he played gracefully and masterly upon it, so that I myself was struck with admiration and envy, though I have so long applied myself to the cithara. Besides, his mother informed us, that she cannot keep him a night in heaven, but from his superfluous industry he privately sneaks down into Tartarus, I suppose to see whether there is anything to steal. For he has somehow got wings and a certain wand¹ which possesses such a surprising efficacy, that he attracts souls with it, and conducts the dead down into Tartarus.

VULCAN. That he had from me : I gave it him for a plaything.

APOLLO. And to requite your kindness, he stole your tongs !

VULCAN. It is well you remind me of it : I will go directly and fetch them back ; I suppose, as you say, I shall find them in his swathes.

VIII

MINERVA'S BIRTH FROM JUPITER'S HEAD

VULCAN JUPITER

VULCAN. What have you for me to do, Jupiter ? I have brought the hatchet, as you ordered me, sharp enough to cleave a stone at one stroke.

¹ *Odyssey*, v. 47. This golden rod seems to be different from the *caduceus* or herald's staff entwined by two serpents.

JUPITER. Very well, Vulcan : then cleave my head in two immediately.

VULCAN. You want to try whether I am in my right senses ? Speak seriously, and tell me what I am to do.

JUPITER. To split my skull, I tell you : obey me instantly, or you will make me angry. It would not be for the first time. Beware of the next therefore. Strike with all your might, and make no further delay. For I can no longer support the pangs that distract my brain.

VULCAN. Look to it, Jupiter, that we do no mischief ! The axe is very sharp ; if you have anything here to be delivered of, it will not perform the midwife's office so gently as Lucina.

JUPITER. Strike boldly : I know that it will be successful.

VULCAN. I obey, sorely as it is against my will ; for who shall resist when you command ? [*Strikes at Jupiter's forehead.*] Ha ! what have we here ? A maid in complete armour ! I am no longer surprised that you suffered such a cruel head-ache, and were for some time past in such an ill-humour ! It is no joke to have the brain-pan teeming with such a great princess armed from top to toe !—How ? She already dances the martial dance without having been taught ! How she whirls and skips, clashes her buckler and brandishes the spear, and apparently becomes more and more vehemently inspired with her inherent divinity ! But, which is most extraordinary, she is so

beautiful, and in so few moments has attained maturity. She has got indeed bluish green cats' eyes, but her helmet becomes her not amiss. I intreat you, Jupiter, as my obstetrical fee, to give her to me in marriage.

JUPITER. You prefer an impossible petition, Vulcan. She resolves to live a virgin. I for my part shall not oppose it.

VULCAN. That is all I crave. Let me alone for the rest ; I shall soon come to rights with her.

JUPITER. If you think it so easy, do your best. I know however that you will not reap much satisfaction from it.¹

IX

MIRACULOUS BIRTH OF BACCHUS

NEPTUNE MERCURY

NEPTUNE. Is Jupiter at leisure to be spoke to, Mercury ?

MERCURY. Not at present, Neptune.

NEPTUNE. Announce me at least.

MERCURY. I desire you not to be troublesome, Neptune ; I tell you that at present he has no time, and that you cannot have sight of him.

NEPTUNE. He is perhaps shut up upon some little affair with Juno ?

MERCURY. No ; quite another matter.

¹ He certainly did not. See Frazer's edition of *Apollo-dorus*, Vol. i., p. 363 *et seq.*

NEPTUNE. Ah, I understand !—Somebody else ?

MERCURY. Nor that neither : in short, he is—
not well.

NEPTUNE. How can that be, Mercury ? That is incomprehensible.

MERCURY. It is so much, that I am ashamed to speak of it.

NEPTUNE. Surely you may speak of it to your uncle.

MERCURY. He is just now delivered of a son.

NEPTUNE. Are you mad ? He delivered ! Who is then the father ? Has he been all the while an hermaphrodite, without our knowing anything of the matter ? By any swelling in his waist at least, no symptoms of his pregnancy were discoverable.

MERCURY. That is true ; but the child lay not where it commonly does.

NEPTUNE. It therefore came from the head, as Minerva did ? His head is an excellent breeder !¹

MERCURY. Not so, this time. He was big (since it must out) in the thick of the thigh with a child of Semele's.

NEPTUNE. Nature has been very liberal to him, it must be owned !² But who then is this Semele ?

MERCURY. A Theban lady, the daughter of Cadmus, who was with child by him.

¹ In the original : “ for he has a regular womb instead of the brain in his head.”

² In the original : “ he is teeming in all parts of his body.”

NEPTUNE. And now he has brought forth for her ?

MERCURY. I perceive the affair seems ridiculous to you ; but it is no otherwise. I will tell you how it happened. Juno, to whose jealousy you are no stranger, artfully came over poor simple Semele, and persuaded her to request of Jupiter that he would come to her in all his glory, with lightning and thunder. Jupiter granted her request : but the house was set on fire by it, and Semele herself struck with lightning. As he could not save the mother, he ordered me at least to cut the child out of her and convey it to him. She being only seven months gone, and therefore the embryo not full timed, he made an opening in his thigh, and stuck it in till it was ripe for the birth. And now at the end of nine months he has brought the child into the world ; but in consequence of a hard labour he finds himself rather weak.

NEPTUNE. Where is the child ?

MERCURY. I am ordered to convey it to Nyssa,¹ there to be brought up by the nymphs under the name Dionysus.

NEPTUNE. My illustrious brother is therefore at the same time father and mother of little Dionysus ?

MERCURY. So it seems. But I can tarry no longer. I must run and fetch water for him,

¹ Or Nysa, a city in India, where Bacchus (Dionysus), according to report, was brought up.

and provide the requisites for a person newly brought to bed.

X

JUPITER AND ALCMENE

MERCURY HELIOS

MERCURY. Helios,¹ you are not to go out to-day, Jupiter says, nor to-morrow, nor the day after. This whole period is to be but one continued night. The Horæ may therefore unharness your horses, and you extinguish your torch and rest all that time.

HELIOS. That is a strange and surprising order, that you bring me. Does he think perhaps that I have not properly performed my course, or my horses gone out of the road, and is therefore so angry with me that he will in future make the night thrice as long as the day ?

MERCURY. That is not the reason ; neither is it always to be so : but he has at this time a particular occasion for a longer night than ordinary.

HELIOS. Where is he then at present, and whence did he send you with this message to me ?

MERCURY. From Bœotia, from the wife of Amphitryon, where he is on a visit.

HELIOS. That is she with whom he is in love.

¹ Or Sol, the sun-god, who is not to be confounded with Phœbus Apollo.

But would not he have enough of her in one night ?

MERCURY. By no means. From this conjunction is to spring an exceeding great and ever victorious hero, an all-conquering god, and that can never be effected in one night.

HELIOS. Much luck then attend the execution of this arduous enterprise ! But—between ourselves, Mercury—in Saturn's time such things did not use to happen. He never forsook Rhea's bed, nor stole away from heaven to pass the night at Thebes : but day was day, and a night lasted not a minute longer than corresponded to the season of the year. Whereas now, for the sake of one graceless woman, all nature must be turned upside down ; my horses grow restive for want of exercise, and my road more rough and difficult to travel, by lying unbeaten for three days together : poor mankind must live miserably in darkness all the while, and, thanks to the amorous temperament of the king of the gods ! there must they sit waiting in that long obscurity, till this great athlete you speak of is finished.

MERCURY. Silence, Helios ! Your glib tongue may bring you into trouble. Farewell ! I will speed to Luna and to Somnus, that I may deliver Jupiter's commands to them likewise ; to the former that she must march slower, and the latter to keep the mortals fast, that they may not perceive how long the night is.

XI

ENDYMION

VENUS LUNA

VENUS. Ah, ah, fair Luna,¹ what is this that is reported of you? So oft as in your course you reach the borders of Caria, you stop, they say, your car, to gaze down upon Endymion, the hunter, as he lies sleeping in the open air; aye, it is even pretended, that sometimes in the middle of your journey you go down to him.

LUNA. Ask your son that question, Venus, for all the blame lies with him.

VENUS. He is indeed a sly rogue; what tricks he has played upon even me? One while beguiling me to be in love with Anchises² upon Ida; then upon Libanus with the famed Assyrian youth.³ With whom also he has made Proserpine enamoured, and thereby cuts off one moiety of him from me. It is certainly not from want of due correction on my part. How often have I threatened him, if he would not leave off his

¹ Selene or Luna, the goddess of the moon, was the sister of Helios, and should be distinguished from Diana, as her brother from Apollo, though it is nothing unusual to see them confounded by the poets.

² Æneas, the hero of Virgil, was the fruit of these rambles of Venus on mount Ida, where Anchises, after the custom of the Trojan princes, tended the cows. See Homer's first hymn to Aphrodite.

³ Adonis.

wicked pranks, to break his bow and arrows, and even to clip his wings to the stumps.¹ It was but the other day that I slapped his breech handsomely with my slipper. He afterwards for a moment indeed behaves submissively and well enough, and promises to amend ; but, I know not how it is, all is presently forgot.—Tell me, however, dear Luna, is Endymion handsome ? For if one should ever fall into that misfortune, the beauty of the object is at least some consolation.

LUNA. To me, dear Venus, he appears very handsome, especially when lying asleep on his hunting pelisse spread upon the rock, and holding a few javelins seemingly just slipping from his left hand, while his right arm with inexpressible grace is brought round beneath his head, so that his hand covers a part of his beautiful face. In this attitude he lies dissolved in the most charming slumber, and his gentle breath is as pure and fragrant as if he was fed with ambrosia. I confess to you that I cannot then refrain from gliding down as lightly as possible, and stealing up to him on tip-toes for fear of breaking his repose, and then—yet why need I tell you what follows ? Suffice it to say, that I do not deny that I am quite out of my senses with love.

¹ An allusion to a passage in Bion's first Idyllium.

XII

ATTIS AND CYBELE

VENUS CUPID

VENUS. Son Cupid, see what work you make ! I do not mean what mankind upon earth, by your instigation, commit against themselves and others, but I speak solely of what passes in heaven, where you make of Jupiter whatever you please, Luna you draw down to the earth, and it is your fault that the Sun-god so frequently keeps such late hours with Clymene,¹ that he forgets to set out upon his journey. Against me, your own mother, you surely think you cannot trespass. But that you have had the insolence, you little chit, to make even goody Rhea,² who is already an old woman, and the mother of so many gods, so desperately in love with this Phrygian boy,³ is too bad. For she is positively frantic, harnesses lions to her car, raves with her Corybantes, whom she has made as mad as

¹ The mother of Phaëton, whose disastrous attempt to conduct the chariot of the Sun forms the subject of the 25th Dialogue.

² Lucian therefore takes Rhea, Cybele, and Demeter, for one person ; for of Cybele is properly related what is here put to the account of Rhea.

³ Attis or Atys, a young Phrygian shepherd, who, like most other young men, not being fond of old women, slighted her. She resented the affront upon his mistress, or as some writers say, on Atys himself, in the severest manner, as may be seen by referring to Catullus.

herself, strolls up and down Ida, howling about her Attis; and as to her Corybantes,¹ one cuts a hole in his arm, another runs with dishevelled hair about the mountains, a third blows a horn, another again beats a drum, or makes a noise by clapping plates of brass together: in short, all Ida is in an uproar and fanatical fury. Under such circumstances I am afraid—for what may not be apprehended by the unhappy wretch that bore you to be the plague of the world!—lest Rhea in a fit of madness, or ought I not rather to say, recovers her senses, should order her Corybantes to seize and tear you to pieces, or throw you to her lions. I assure you, you are not for one moment in safety!

CUPID. Be pacified, dear mother; the lions will do nothing to me; we are perfectly good friends: they quietly let me get upon their backs, when, laying hold of their manes instead of a bridle, they suffer me to conduct them wherever I will. They even fawn upon and caress me, and lick my hand when I put it in their chops, without hurting me. But as to old Rhea, how should she find leisure to trouble her head about me, since she is altogether taken up with her passion for Attis? Besides, after all, what injury do I commit in pointing out what is beautiful? If you suffer yourself to be enthralled by it, that is

¹ The priests of Cybele. Lucian describes the curious practices of the Galli, or castrated priests, in his *De Dea Syria*. See Penzer, *Ocean of Story*, Vol. iii., pp. 327, 328.

your affair ; how am I to blame for it ? Would you wish, mother, to be cured of your love for the war-god, or him to be cured of his passion for you ?

VENUS. You are a subtle young varlet ; there is no coming up with you. There however certainly will come a time, when you will have cause to remember my warnings !

XIII

QUARREL ABOUT PRECEDENCE BETWEEN TWO RECENTLY CREATED DEITIES

JUPITER ÆSCULAPIUS HERCULES

JUPITER. Let me hear no more of this, Æsculapius and Hercules ! You to quarrel as if you were still human ! It is not seemly for gods ; and least of all at table.

HERCULES. Is it your pleasure then, Jupiter, that this quack doctor should sit above me ?

ÆSCULAPIUS. I should think so ; seeing I am a better man than he.

HERCULES. In what respect, you thunder-struck fellow ? Perhaps because Jupiter struck you dead with his bolt, for doing what you ought not to have done ; and because now out of pity you are adopted among the immortals ?

ÆSCULAPIUS. You must have forgot, Hercules, that you yourself were burnt upon mount Cæta, that you are so ready to cast fire in my teeth.

HERCULES. There was a great difference between my life and yours. I was an own son of Jupiter, and my whole lifetime was one continued conflict with the enemies of mankind, whom I rid the world of—with monsters that I vanquished, and tyrannical men whom I brought to punishment. Whereas you are nothing but a rootscrapper and a mountebank. To administer physic to ailing folks, that perhaps you may be fit for ; but no manly act in all your life can you produce.

ÆSCULAPIUS. Verily that was not one, when I cured the blisters with which you were all over covered, on your return to heaven having been half-roasted, and by the envenomed shirt (of Deianira) and the flames together, your body was almost consumed ! Besides, if I could allege nothing else in my behalf, I never was a servant, and never carded wool in Lydia, and never wore a woman's purple gown, and never got a slap on the face by Omphale's golden slipper, nor did I ever murder my wife and children in a fit of the spleen.

HERCULES. If you do not immediately give over your abuse, you shall be convinced experimentally, that your immortality will little avail you when I send you packing headlong down to earth, and make such a fracture in your skull, that all the skill of Pæon¹ himself shall not be able to stitch it together again !

¹ This Pæon or Pæon was surgeon to the gods, as may be seen from the fifth book of the *Iliad*. It seems probable

JUPITER. Leave off quarrelling, I say, and no longer interrupt the pleasure of the company, or I send you both away from the table! However, Hercules, it is but fair, that Æsculapius should sit above you, if it were for no other reason than that he died first.

XIV

MELANCHOLY DEATH OF THE BEAUTIFUL
HYACINTHUS

MERCURY APOLLO

MERCURY. Why so sad, Apollo?

APOLLO. Because I am crossed in my amours.

MERCURY. That indeed is reason enough. But may one ask what it is at present that causes you to repine at your fate in love? Is the story of Daphne still running in your head?

APOLLO. No; I lament my favourite, the son of Œbalus, of Laconia.

MERCURY. How? the amiable Hyacinthus is dead? ¹

that he as well as Helios had been one of the old gods of Saturn's court, and, like Helios, was not till later ages confounded with Phœbus Apollo. That both Homer and Hesiod distinguish him from Apollo, is certain. See the remark of the scholiast on the 232nd verse of the fourth book of the *Odyssey*.

¹ Pausanias, lib. iii. 1, makes Hyacinthus a son of the Spartan king Amyclus, who was the grandfather of Œbalus. Lucian seems to follow the vulgar tradition.

APOLLO. Alas !

MERCURY. But of what then ? Who could be so great a foe to every thing that is lovely, as to kill so beautiful a boy ?

APOLLO. It was I myself that did it.

MERCURY. Are you mad, Apollo ?

APOLLO. No. My misfortune made me his murderer against my will.

MERCURY. I should like to know how it happened.

APOLLO. He was learning by practice to throw the discus, and I was his companion. Now the most detested of all the winds, Zephyrus, had long been fond of the boy as well as myself ; but because he could not gain his attachment, he watched for an opportunity to be revenged. Now, when I threw the discus, as we had many times done before, high up in the air, this cursed Zephyr gave a blast downwards from Taygetus,¹ and drove it falling with such force against the boy's head, that the blood gushed in torrents from the wound, and the boy died on the spot. Boiling with rage, I pursued Zephyrus quite to the mountain, and shot all my arrows after him ; but in vain. I afterwards erected a high tomb to the boy, at Amyclæ, on the place where the unlucky discus laid him low ; and from his blood, Hermes, I caused the earth to produce the fairest and loveliest of all flowers, and I marked it with the letters of the lamenta-

¹ A mountain in Laconia.

tion for the dead.¹ Have I not reason to be melancholy ?

MERCURY. No. Since you knew that you had chose a mortal for your favourite, how can you take it amiss that he is dead ?

XV

JEALOUSY OF THE TWO COMELIEST GODS AT VULCAN'S SUCCESS IN MARRIAGE

MERCURY APOLLO

MERCURY. But that this Vulcan, who after all is only a cripple, and by trade a blacksmith, should have the fairest of our goddesses, Venus and Charis, for his wives—is it not intolerable ?

APOLLO. He has strange good luck, Mercury. But what I wonder at is, that they can bear to live with one, who is always dripping with sweat, and has his face begrimed with soot, by constantly bending over his forge ; and to embrace such a one, not to say, sleep beside him !

MERCURY. This it is that vexes me ; and I cannot help envying this Vulcan. He lets us be as proud as we will of our pre-eminences, you of your flowing curls, your fine figure and your skill

¹ That is, with the letters *Αι*, *Αι*. These letters with which the flower of the hyacinth is said to be marked, as well as the pretended dying melodies of the swan, became a trite saying with the ancient poets ; yet, till this very day, neither the swans sing, nor the hyacinth, nor any other known flower is marked with *Αι*.

on the cithara ; me for my athletic make, and my lyre : but when bed-time comes we must lie alone !

APOLLO. I am generally unfortunate in my amours. With the only two that I loved in right earnest above all others, nothing could have succeeded worse with me. Daphne had so great a dislike to me, that she chose rather to become a tree, than be mine ; poor Hyacinthus lost his life by a stroke of the discus ; and now in lieu of them I have laurel-wreaths and chaplets of flowers.

MERCURY. Once upon a time however—without boasting—Venus was propitious to me.

APOLLO. Somewhat of it has got abroad ; it is even reported that she had the beautiful Hermaphroditus¹ by you. But tell me if you can ; how comes it to pass that Venus and Charis are not jealous of one another ?

MERCURY. I know no other reason, but because the latter lives with him at Lemnos, and Venus resides in heaven ; besides Venus is too busily employed with her Mars to have much care about the blacksmith.

APOLLO. Do you think that Vulcan knows anything of this intrigue ?

MERCURY. Perfectly well ; but what would you have him to do ? To engage with a lusty young rival, who is moreover a soldier, it would not be advisable. He therefore keeps it all hush ; but

¹ See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, lib. iv. fab. 11.

is working secretly on a curiously contrived net, in which at their next interview, and when least thinking of him, he hopes to catch them.¹

XVI

THE QUEEN OF THE DEITIES GIVES VENT TO
HER JEALOUSY OF LATONA

JUNO LATONA

JUNO. You have blest Jupiter with a pair of beautiful children, it must be confessed, Latona.²

LATONA. We cannot all bring such beautiful children into the world, as your Vulcan.

JUNO. After all, lame as he is, he is of some use ; for he is a great artificer, and the most elegant moveables in heaven are his workmanship ; and, notwithstanding his ugliness, he has got a handsome wife, and is much valued on her account. But what can we say of your children ? One of them mightily affects the man, and runs raving like a fury up and down the mountains and woods ; and since she lately retired to the Scythians in Tauris, and causes the travellers in those parts to be sacrificed, everybody knows what her diet is ; living as she does among

¹ This communication, which Mercury makes to Apollo in confidence, forms the prelude to the 17th Dialogue.

² Latona (or Leto) was a daughter of the Titan Cœus, and therefore a cousin to Jupiter, to whom she bore Apollo and Diana as twins.

cannibals, it may be easily imagined, that she has adopted their manners. Your Apollo too gives himself airs as if he knew everything, and was expert in all arts ; he pretends to be an archer, a harper, a poet and a physician ; and at Delphi, and at Claros, and at Didyma ¹ has set up divination-shops, where he cheats the people that come to consult him out of their money by ambiguous answers, that may be turned either way. As the fools who suffer themselves to be imposed upon by mountebanks are numerous, he grows rich by them : but intelligent people know what they are to think of his miraculous arts, and that the great prophet could not once foresee that he should kill his favourite with a discus, and that Daphne, in spite of his beauty and his long golden locks, would run away from him. I see not therefore how you can imagine, you have finer children than Niobe.²

LATONA. Oh, I understand right well why this man-eater and this lying prophet are eyesores to you, on your being forced to see them sitting

¹ The most famous oracles of Apollo were at Delphi in the territory of Phocis ; at Claros, a place belonging to the city of Colophon in Ionia, and at Didyma, near Miletus in Ionia, which, if we may trust the tradition, had a son of this god for its builder.

² Niobe, a daughter of Tantalus and niece to Jupiter, was so proud of the fourteen children she had borne to King Amphion of Thebes, that she insolently preferred herself to Latona. The revenge of the latter is known from the famous group of Niobe and her children, which is at present the principal ornament of the Grand Ducal Museum at Florence.

among the gods, and how it vexes you to behold them admired by all, one for her beauty, and the other when playing on the cithara at the banquet.

JUNO. Now indeed, Latona, I must laugh at your taste. Apollo admirable ! He, who had been flayed by Marsyas,¹ if the Muses had decided justly, he being beyond comparison the better musician : whereas, the poor wretch was sacrificed to a partial sentence. As for the beauty of that fair maid your daughter, she was so conscious of her charms, that after being seen by Actæon when bathing, she set his own dogs to worry him to death, for fear he should divulge her deformities. Not to mention, that she would hardly officiate as a midwife,² if she was a virgin.

LATONA. You presume by far too much upon your being Jupiter's wife and joint-sovereign, and therefore take some more liberty with others than becomes you. I hope however that it will not be long before I see you again whimpering and sobbing at his leaving you neglected, when he rambles down to earth in the shape of a bull or a swan.

¹ A satyr, who challenged Apollo to a trial of skill, at which the Muses were umpires, and as was very natural decided in favour of their president.

² As Ilithya. With the Romans, Juno (Hera), as Lucina, was the patroness of child-bearing women.

XVII

THE NET OF VULCAN

APOLLO MERCURY

APOLLO. Why do you laugh so, Mercury ?

MERCURY. At somewhat very laughable, that I have just seen, Apollo.

APOLLO. Tell it then, that I may laugh with you.

MERCURY. Venus with her Mars are caught together in the act ; and Vulcan has ensnared them so artfully, that they absolutely cannot get free.

APOLLO. How did he contrive that ? It must be a diverting story !

MERCURY. He had long, I suppose, had some suspicions, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to spread the curious net, which I lately told you of, and having as he thought found one, he set it about his bed, and made as if on account of some work he had to do, he was obliged to go to his forge at Lemnos. Scarcely was he gone, when Mars, suspecting nothing of the trick, crept in by stealth : he was however descried by Helios, who immediately gave intelligence of it to Vulcan. In the meantime our lovers ascended the bed, and entangled themselves, you may imagine how, in the invisible meshes, which succeeded delightfully. On a sudden in came Vulcan in his proper person. The poor lady, who was in the state of simple nature,

was ready to die with shame, nothing being within reach to cover herself with ; the gallant for a while thought he could tear the net and save himself by flight ; but, perceiving that to be impossible, had recourse to intreaties.

APOLLO. Now, for Vulcan ? Did he release them ?

MERCURY. No ; he would not let them off so easily. He called all the gods together, to make them eye-witnesses of his happiness in wedlock. You are better able to imagine, than I am to describe the distress and confusion of the two principal personages, in the circumstances and attitude in which they were entrapped ; it is a spectacle well worth seeing, I assure you !

APOLLO. But is not the blacksmith then ashamed thus to proclaim to all the world his own disgrace ?

MERCURY. Oh, by Jupiter ; he stands by, and laughs louder than all the rest ! I, for my own individual person, if I must confess the truth, could not help thinking that Mars, when I beheld him so implicated with the fairest of all the goddesses, was in a very enviable situation.¹

APOLLO. You would then submit to be shackled at that price ?

MERCURY. And you perhaps not, Apollo ? Come only and see yourself, and if you are not at the

¹ See the narrative which forms the basis in the present Dialogue of this edifying piece of history, in the eighth book of the *Odyssey*.

first glance of my opinion, I will pronounce a lofty panegyric on your wisdom.

XVIII

JUNO LECTURES HER HUSBAND ON ACCOUNT OF HIS BASTARD BACCHUS

JUNO JUPITER

JUNO. I should be ashamed, Jupiter, if I had such a son, as your Bacchus ; so voluptuous, and so given to drunkenness, that he is never perfectly sober, and makes no scruple of wearing a womanish head-dress among the mad girls with whom he passes his time in dancing and revelling to the sound of drums, pipes and cymbals. If he is your son, it must be owned that he is more like any other than his father.

JUPITER. Yet this effeminate lad, whose womanish habits you cannot sufficiently describe, conquered Lydia, vanquished the inhabitants of Tmolus, and subdued the Thracians to his authority; aye, with this same pack of women he has penetrated into India, and led away captive their king, who had the audacity to resist him ; and all this in singing and dancing, with no other weapon than the ivy-twined thyrsus in his hand, drunk as you say and raving. And whoever dared to flout or deride his mysteries, him he either bound with vine-twigs, or caused the presumptuous wretch to be regarded by his own mother as a

fawn,¹ and torn in pieces. These are manly acts of which his father, I should think, can have no reason to be ashamed ! If in the course of such achievements a little petulance and levity should appear, let it not be treated with severity ; especially upon considering what he would do sober, who can do thus drunk.

JUNO. I should not wonder if in your present humour you were to commend the grand invention, on which he magnifies himself so much, of the vine and the beverage produced from it, although you see what are its effects, and how the drunkards reel about, and what furious extravagances they are hurried on to commit in their intoxication, which frequently proceeds to complete madness ; as Icarius, the first to whom he presented the plant, may serve as an instance, who was put to death with pitch-forks by his drunken pot-companions.²

JUPITER. That is nothing to the purpose ; for this neither wine nor Bacchus are in fault, but the people who drink more than does them good and they are able to bear. But whoever drinks moderately is the merrier for it and more pleasant

¹ Such was the fate of the Theban king Pentheus, on his resisting the introduction of the orgies of Dionysus (Bacchus), and not allowing full validity to the patent of this newly promoted god. See the *Bacchantes* of Euripides, and the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th fables of the third book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

² This story is likewise thus related by Apollodorus, Bk. III. xiv. 7. See Frazer's trans., Vol. ii., p. 97.

in conversation, and his pot-companions may be sure that they have not to fear from him the fate of Icarius. I perceive clearly, dear Juno, that jealousy is here again at work, and that your old grudge to Semele prompts you to condemn in Bacchus those things for which he is most commendable.

XIX

WHY CUPID LEAVES SOME GODDESSES UNEXCITED

VENUS CUPID

VENUS. How comes it to pass, Cupid, that you who have mastered all the other deities, Jupiter, Neptune, Apollo, Rhea, and even me, your mother, leave Minerva alone unattacked; and that for her your torch has no flame, and your quiver no arrows?

CUPID. I am afraid of her, dear mother; she has somewhat so stern and terrifying in her countenance, and looks at me with such masculine fierceness. When I do but approach her with my bent bow, and she only shakes her plumed crest at me, such a sudden horror comes upon me, that I tremble in every joint, and both bow and arrow drop out of my hands.

VENUS. Is not Mars then still more formidable? And yet you have disarmed and conquered him.

CUPID. Oh, he freely lets me come up to him, and even calls me: whereas Minerva perpetually

looks at me with distrustful eyes. Once as I flew by her, and accidentally came too close to her with my torch, she directly put herself in a menacing posture, "If you come nigher," said she, "I will, by my father! thrust the lance through your body, or take you by the leg and hurl you down to Tartarus, or tear you piecemeal with my own hands." She dealt out a copious volley of other threats, and always puts on such a grim visage, and has besides such a ghastly head with snaky hair on her breast, at which I am most dreadfully frightened, it makes such a horrible bugbear-face¹ at me, that I am forced involuntarily to run away as soon as it appears.

VENUS. You are frightened then, you say, at Minerva and her Medusa's head,—you, whom Jupiter himself with his thunderbolt cannot appal? But why are the Muses invulnerable to you and shot-free? Do they perhaps shake their helmet-plumes at you, and hold Gorgon's heads before your face?

CUPID. For them I have respect, mother; for they look so grave, and are always either pensive or singing; I often stay with them as though I could not get away, I am so enchanted by their song.

¹æ. The *mormo* was a sort of hobgoblin (as the *lamias* and *empuses* were) with which gossips and nurses (who among the Greeks were no wiser than ours) used to frighten children, to make them sleep or be good. See Hastings's *Ency. Rel. Eth.*, Vol. iv., p. 592.

VENUS. Well, we will let alone these Muses, because they are so grave ; but what is the reason that you do not wound Diana ?

CUPID. Oh, her I can never come at. She is perpetually hunting in the mountains, and then is entirely taken up with a passion of her own.

VENUS. What is that, my sweet boy ?

CUPID. The passion for the chase, for the stags and fawns, which she pursues the whole day long with such vehemence, that she is not susceptible of any other passion. For as to her brother, though he too is an expert archer——

VENUS. I understand what you mean, child ; him you have shot pretty often !

XX

THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS

JUPITER MERCURY JUNO PALLAS VENUS
PARIS, *alias* ALEXANDER

JUPITER. Mercury, take this apple, and go with it into Phrygia, to Priam's son, who tends cows upon the Gargarus summit of Ida,¹ and tell him from me, that because he himself is handsome, and is particularly conversant with love affairs, I command him to decide which of these goddesses

¹ Gargarus is the middlemost of the three mountains of which Ida consists. In Strabo's time the scene of this famous judgment of Paris was still shewn on a mountain that bore the name of Alexandria. It is about 5000 feet in height.

is the most beautiful ; and the conqueror in this contest is to receive the apple from his hand.— And now, Goddesses, it is time for you to repair to your judge. I cannot personally have anything to do in the decision, since ye are all equally dear to me, and if it could so be, should gladly see all three come off victorious. But besides, it is impossible to award the prize of beauty to one, without attracting the hatred of the other two. For these several reasons it is absolutely improper for me to be your judge. Whereas this Phrygian youth, to whom you are to go, is of royal blood ; and a relation of Ganymede here, withal a simple child of nature, and whom none can deem unworthy of such a spectacle.

VENUS. I, for my part, would boldly submit myself to such a survey, were you to appoint even the censorious Momus judge ; for what defect could he find in me ? But these two should likewise be satisfied with the man.

JUNO. Neither are we at all afraid, even though your own Mars were the arbitrator ; to this Paris therefore, whoever he is, we have nothing to object.

JUPITER. Is that your opinion, daughter Minerva ? What say you ? You turn away your face, and blush. It is so like you maidens, to blush at anything of the sort : however you declare your assent by a nod. Go then ; but I charge you in no case to harbour any resentment against your judge, nor do the poor young man

any harm. For after all it is not perhaps possible, that all should be alike beautiful.

MERCURY. Let us proceed then direct for Phrygia ; I will lead the way, and you follow me quite at your ease. Take courage ! I know Paris ; he is a fine young fellow, and a loving soul besides ; he is incomparably well fitted to be a judge in such matters. He will most assuredly not be warped in his judgment.

VENUS. So much the better for me, if our judge is as just as you say.—Is he still single, or has he a wife ?

MERCURY. Not altogether single perhaps, Aphrodite.

VENUS. What do you mean by that ?

MERCURY. I know this, that he has a girl of Ida with him, a likely lass, though rather clumsy, and—such as generally grow upon the mountains. He seems not very fond of her. But why do you ask that question ?

VENUS. I asked it merely for the sake of saying something.

PALLAS. Perhaps, Mercury, it is not in your instructions to enter into private conversation with her ?

MERCURY. It was of no consequence, Minerva ; and we said nothing against you : she only asked me whether Paris is still single.

PALLAS. How does that concern her ?

MERCURY. That I cannot tell. She said it was entirely without design that she asked it ; it

was only a sudden thought that came into her head.

PALLAS. And is he then single ?

MERCURY. I believe not.

PALLAS. But has he a turn for military affairs ? Is he ambitious of glory, or nothing better than an ordinary cow-herd ?

MERCURY. I cannot speak precisely : but as he is still young, it is to be supposed that he is not devoid of such passions, and that it perhaps would not grieve him to be a great warrior.

VENUS. You see, Mercury, I do not take you to task for speaking to her in private : Aphrodite leaves it to certain persons to be always finding a pretence for letting out their ill-humours.

MERCURY. She asked me nearly the same question that you did. You have therefore no reason to take it ill, or to think that something to your disadvantage was passing between us ; I answered her with the same simplicity as I did you. But see, while we have been talking we are far advanced on our journey, and have left the stars a great way behind us. The country that lies before us is Phrygia ; for I now plainly discern Ida and all Gargarus, and, if I am right, I even see our Judge Paris in his proper person.

JUNO. Where then ? I see nothing of him yet.

MERCURY. Look yonder, Juno, to the left ; not on the top of the mountain ; on the side, where you perceive the cave and the herd.

JUNO. But I see no herd.

MERCURY. How ? Do not you see the little cow ; it is a great way off, and from the distance appears no bigger than my finger ; there, coming down from among the rocks : and one with a little crooked stick in his hand, running down from the summit and driving her back, lest she should stray too far from the drove ?

JUNO. Now I see him ; if it is he.

MERCURY. He it is. Therefore, as we are so near the earth, let us, if agreeable to you, alight at once, and advance to him on foot, lest we should scare him by flying down upon him unawares.

JUNO. Well advised ! let us do so.—Now that we are on firm ground, will you, Aphrodite, condescend to shew us the way, for you must be best acquainted with every part of this district, since, as it is said, you have often been here to visit Anchises.

VENUS. You are greatly mistaken, Juno, if you imagine that such sneers put me out of temper.

MERCURY. Only follow me. At the time when Jupiter cast his regards on Ganymede, I was very well acquainted with Ida. I was often enough forced to descend to look after the boy ; and when he transformed himself into an eagle, I flew to him and helped him to carry his favourite. If I am right in my recollection, he caught him up from this very rock, where he was just sitting among his sheep, and playing on his oaten pipe.

All at once Jupiter pounced upon him, clasped him as gently as possible with his claws round the waist, bit him with the beak in his turban, and whirled the boy up in the air, who turned his face back in consternation and amazement to look up at his ravisher ; in the meantime I picked up his pipe, which in his fright he had let fall.—But we are now so nigh to our umpire, that we had best speak to him.—Good day, cow-herd !

PARIS. The like to you, young man ! What brings you here to us ? And who are these ladies you have along with you ? They appear to be not quite at home in these mountains ; they are too fine for that.

MERCURY. They are in truth no ordinary ladies, my good Paris. You see here Juno, Pallas and Venus before you, and in me you behold Mercury, dispatched from Jupiter. Why do you tremble and change colour ? Fear nothing ; you shall not be hurt ! He only orders you to pass judgment on their beauty. For, as you yourself are handsome, he said, and reckoned well skilled in love affairs, he leaves to you the decision. What the prize of this contest is, you will read on that apple.

PARIS. Now, here : let us see what it says : *Let the fairest have it !* But, gracious master Mercury, how should a simple mortal and a boor moreover, like me, be able to determine a point so weighty ? That is above the understanding of a cow-herd ;

such matters belong to the fine gentlemen of the city. Indeed if the question was about kids or calves I should decide according to art, which is the most beautiful ! But with these ladies it is quite a different thing ; they are all alike beautiful, and I know not how one should do, to turn the eyes from one to the other. A man must use all his force to tear them off ; they will not away : what they first gazed at, there they stick fast, and deem that the fairest : if they turn to another, it fares just the same ; the next is then so good, that one is sufficed with it, and desires nothing better. I know not which way to express it, but with me it is as if I was occupied entirely and absorbed by their beauty, and I am sorry, that I am not, like Argus, all over eyes, and cannot gaze on them from every part of my body. I believe therefore I shall best execute my office of judge by giving the apple to all three of them. Besides, must not the awful consideration, that one is Jupiter's sister and wife, and the two others his daughters, add much to the difficulty of deciding ?

MERCURY. I cannot say. But this I know ; that you must not think to evade the command of Jupiter.

PARIS. I only beg one thing of you, Mercury ; that you will bring it about, that the two who come short in this business, will not be angry with me, but believe that the fault is solely in my eyes.

MERCURY. That they promise you. Therefore make ready to proceed to judgment.

PARIS. I will do my best, since do I must. First, however, I desire to know whether it will be sufficient to view them as they stand there ; or whether they should not undress, that the investigation may be made with greater accuracy ?

MERCURY. That depends solely on the judge ; make a thorough inspection, Paris, you have only to give orders how you would have it.

PARIS. How I would have it ? If that is the case, then I would see them naked.

MERCURY. The ladies will therefore please to put off their clothes ; I will in the meantime look another way.

VENUS. Very right, Paris !—I will be the first without hesitation to undress, that you may see I have not only white elbows, or think much of myself for having a pair of large eyes, but that I am all over equally beautiful.

PALLAS. Before all things, O Paris, let her lay aside her girdle ; for she is an inchantress, and by the aid of it can fascinate you ;¹ neither ought she to have so mightily tricked herself out, and put on so much white and red, that she looks like an arrant courtesan, but should have left her beauty unadorned and natural, as it is.

¹ The magical power of Venus's girdle is universally known. *Iliad*, xiv. 214 and *seq.* compare the beautiful imitation of this passage in the fourteenth canto of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, stanzas 24 and 25.

PARIS. You are perfectly right, as to the girdle, therefore off with it !

VENUS. And why then do not you, Minerva, take off your head-piece, and shew yourself bare-headed, and not nod your plumes, as if you would intimidate the judge ? Are you afraid lest your cerulean eyes might have no striking effect without the formidable quality they borrow from your helmet ?

PALLAS. There then is my helmet for you.

VENUS. And there is my girdle for you.

JUNO. Now let us undress without more delay.

PARIS. O wonder-working Jupiter, what a sight ! What beauty ! What delight ! What a virgin is this ! What a lustre is darted from that ! What majesty ! How royal, how completely worthy of Jupiter !—And this next, how benignly she looks at one ! How charming and winning her smiles ! No ! this is too much for me to bear at once !—I will now, if agreeable to you, take a particular view of each ; for at present I waver this way and that, and see so many beauties together that I cannot stop an instant on one object, and scarcely know what I see, or which way to turn my eyes.

VENUS. As you please.

PARIS. Then stand aside, you two ; and you, Juno, remain here.

JUNO. Well, here I am ; and when you have viewed me well, consider, whether you like the present I intend to make you for your suffrage.

If you decide that I am the fairest you shall be sovereign lord of all Asia.

PARIS. I am not to be wrought upon by bribes.—You may retire ; I shall do as I think right.—Now, Pallas, do you come hither.

PALLAS. Here am I ; and if you pronounce me the fairest, you shall never be overcome in battle, but always keep the field ; for I will make a great warrior and a conquering hero of you.

PARIS. I have nothing at all to do with war and battles, Pallas ; peace reigns over all Phrygia and Lydia, and my father's kingdom is in no dread of war. Notwithstanding that however, be easy ; you shall have justice done you, though I am not to be corrupted by presents. You may dress yourself again, and put on your helmet ; I have examined you sufficiently. It is time now for Venus to advance.

VENUS. Here you see me as near as you can require ; survey every part of me separately, pass nothing over hastily, but tarry at every single beauty apart.—But if it be your pleasure, gentle swain, hearken to what I say. You are young and handsome, and one might search through all Phrygia and scarcely meet with such another ; I esteem you fortunate on that account, but I cannot approve of your not having long since exchanged these rocks for the city, and preferring to let your beauty consume away in a solitude, where it is entirely useless. For what is it to your cattle, that you are beautiful ? You

ought to have been married long ere now ; I mean not to a peasant girl, like those of Ida, but to some fair Grecian, of Argos or Corinth or Sparta, such as Helen, for example, who is young and beautiful, and in no respect inferior to myself, and what is better than all, very easily takes fire. For you may be assured, if she were only to see you, she would throw herself into your arms, and leave all mankind to follow and live with you. However, it is impossible but you must have heard talk of her.

PARIS. Not a word, Aphrodite ; but I will listen to you with pleasure if you will tell me more of her.

VENUS. She is a daughter of the beautiful Leda, on whom Jupiter in the form of a swan flew down.

PARIS. What is her complexion ?

VENUS. As white as can be desired ; having had a swan to her father ; tender as one that has crept out of an egg ; well grown, strong and agile, as one practised in gymnastic exercises ; to sum up all, her beauty is in such high repute, and the men are so smitten with her, that a war was kindled on her account, when Theseus ran away with her while hardly more than a child. Since however she has attained her full bloom, all the princes of Greece have wooed her in marriage. She is now indeed betrothed to the Pelopidan Menelaus. But notwithstanding, if you desire, I will help you to this match.

PARIS. How is that ? to marry a person that is already married !

VENUS. What a novice you are ; and what crude notions you entertain ! I must know best in what manner such things are to be brought about.

PARIS. How then ? I should be glad to know.

VENUS. Do you take a journey under pretence of visiting Greece ; and when you come to Sparta, Helen will get a sight of you ; that she shall fall in love with you and follow you away, will then be my business.

PARIS. But that too appears to me incredible, that she should leave her spouse, and go to sea with a stranger and barbarian.

VENUS. Give yourself no concern about that. I have two sons of exquisite beauty, Cupid and Amor, whom I will give you as guides on this journey. Amor shall take entire possession of her, and compel her to love ; Himerus, the while, shall diffuse himself about you, and make you as amiable and captivating as himself. Even I also with the Graces will be present, so that all of us together will force her to submit to our will.

PARIS. How the affair will turn out, goddess, I know not : but this I feel, that I am in love with Helen at this instant. I cannot tell how it is, but methinks I see her before me, and am sailing straight to Greece, and am arrived at Sparta, and am already returned with my fair

prize ; and now it grieves me to find all this not yet actually performed.

VENUS. Beware, Paris, of indulging this passion, till you have testified your gratitude to me, the authoress of that union, and the future bridemaïd at your nuptials, by giving your award in my favour. For bringing your marriage to effect, I must first receive the prize in this contest, and celebrate at once your wedding and my triumph ; in a word, it lies entirely with you, to purchase your success in love and the fairest lady in all Greece with this apple.

PARIS. My only fear is, that when once I have pronounced sentence, you will care no more about me.

VENUS. Would you have me swear to you ?

PARIS. No ; I will be content if you only promise.

VENUS. I promise you then, that I will give you Helen to wife, and that she shall follow you to Troy ; I myself will be present, and bring everything about.

PARIS. And will bring with you Amor and Himerus and the Graces ?

VENUS. Set your mind at rest ; and Pothos¹ and Hymen shall both likewise attend us.

PARIS. It is therefore but reasonable that I

¹ *Desire*. The Grecian poets and artists, who personified and idealised the several virtues, efficacies, impulses, faculties and passions, made the vehement and ardent desire or cupidity, which can only be satiated by enjoyment, into one of the amorous deities belonging to the retinue of Venus.

should award the apple to you. Take it therefore on those conditions !

XXI

MARS RIDICULES A GASCONADE OF JUPITER

MARS MERCURY

MARS. Did you hear, Mercury, how Jupiter threatened us ? At once how arrogantly and absurdly ? If I please, said he, I will let down a chain from heaven, at which if you all tug ever so hard, and endeavour with all your might to drag me down, it will be in vain : you will not move me from the spot. Whereas if I choose to draw the chain back again, I will draw not only you, but the earth and the sea also, above the clouds—and many other things of the like sort, which you must have heard. I for my part am willing to allow, that he is stronger than any of us taken singly : but that he alone should so far overbalance us all together, that we could not weigh him to the ground, even with the earth and sea thrown into our scale, is what I cannot understand.

MERCURY. Have a care, Mars ! It is dangerous to run on so freely ; your jesting may bring us into trouble.

MARS. Do you imagine that I would talk thus to anybody but yourself, whose secrecy I know I can depend upon ? I cannot refrain from

telling you how ridiculous it appeared to me when I heard him bragging at such a rate. I recollected, for it is not long ago, when Neptune, Juno, and Minerva rose up against him, and formed a conspiracy to arrest and bind him, how fearfully he varied himself through all shapes, notwithstanding there were only three of them : and really, had not Thetis from compassion called in the hundred armed Briareus to his assistance, they would have shut him up in spite of all his lightning and thunder. When I adverted in my own mind to this adventure, I could not help laughing on hearing his vainglorious oration.

MERCURY. Hush ! No more of this, Mars ! It is neither safe for you to hold such language, nor for me to hear it.

XXII

MERCURY AGAINST HIS WILL IS PERSUADED BY PAN THAT HE IS HIS FATHER

PAN MERCURY

PAN. Good-day, father Mercury !

MERCURY. Oh, good-day to you likewise ! But since when are we such near relations ?

PAN. Are not you then perhaps Mercury of Cyllene ? ¹

¹ Cyllenius is one of the most common surnames of Mercury, from the mountain Cyllene, in Arcadia, where Maia received that stolen visit from Jupiter, which made her Mercury's mother.

MERCURY. That I am certainly ; but how does it follow thence that you are my son ?

PAN. Not quite regularly—but the natural offspring of love after your fashion.

MERCURY. By Jupiter, you look more like the son of a she-goat, after the fashion of a he-goat. How should I come by a son with horns, and with such a nose and such a shaggy beard and cloven feet, and a tail at his rump ?

PAN. In speaking so scornfully of your own son, father, little honour is indeed conferred on me ; but certainly your share of it is less, by bringing such children into the world ; I cannot help my form.

MERCURY. Who was then your mother ? I hope I have not unwittingly come in contact with a she-goat.

PAN. Not at all ; but recollect whether you did not once seduce a free-born maid in Arcadia ? Why do you bite your nails, and make as if you could not call it to mind ? I speak of the daughter of Icarius, Penelope.

MERCURY. But what sort of vagary was that, to present me with a son resembling a goat ?

PAN. I will tell you how she herself related the affair. When she sent me to Arcadia, she said to me : “ My son, I your mother am Penelope of Sparta : but know, that you have a god for your father, even Mercury, the son of Jupiter and Maia ; let it not trouble you that you have horns and goat’s feet, for Mercury, in order not

to be discovered, assumed the form of a goat when he became your father."

MERCURY. I remember well, that something of the kind may have once happened. But that I, who have always prided myself on my figure, and withal have a smooth chin, should pass for your father, and be laughed at by everybody for my beautiful offspring, is what I cannot easily digest.

PAN. I shall be no disgrace to you, father ; I am a musician, and play upon the pipe to admiration ; and Bacchus, who cannot live without me, has taken me for his constant companion, and made me leader of his band. And if you were to see the flocks which I have about Tegea and mount Parthenius, it would be a real pleasure to you. All Arcadia is subject to me ; and not long ago I marched to reinforce the Athenians with my succours, and behaved so well at Marathon that they have granted me the cavern beneath the citadel as a reward for my bravery. If ever you should go to Athens, you will hear what a great name Pan has acquired there.

MERCURY. Since then you are a person of so much consequence, Pan,—for so methinks you call yourself—have you taken to you a wife ?

PAN. Many thanks, honoured father !—I am rather of a warm temperament, and should not be content with one.

MERCURY. You are very great then, I imagine, with the goats ?

PAN. You are pleased to be witty.—Oh, I have different affairs of gallantry ! With Echo, Pitho, and all the Mænades of Bacchus, numerous as they are, and I am very much valued by them, I can assure you.

MERCURY. Well, son, will you grant one favour ?

PAN. Father, you have only to command ; I shall obey, if possible.

MERCURY. Come hither and embrace me ! But be sure never to call me father, when anybody is within hearing.

XXIII

STRANGE DISPARITY IN THREE SONS OF THE GODDESS OF LOVE

APOLLO BACCHUS

APOLLO. Who would believe, Dionysus, that Amor, Hermaphroditus, and Priapus, were own brothers ? They, who in form, temper, and manners are so very unlike ! For the first is everything that can be called beautiful, and expert in handling the bow, and is endowed with a power, whereby he is master of all the world. The second is effeminate, only the moiety of a man, with such an ambiguous countenance, that at first sight it is difficult to decide, whether he is a boy or a girl ; whereas Priapus is more of a man than he should be.

BACCHUS. That is not so surprising as you may

think, Apollo ; Venus is not to be blamed for it, but the difference of the fathers.¹ It happens sometimes, that the same mother has by one father twins of different sexes, as was the case with you and your sister.

APOLLO. That may perhaps be true : but we are alike, and follow the same employment ; for we are both archers.

BACCHUS. So far only I grant the resemblance : for Diana slays strangers among the Scythians ; whereas you are a prophet and physician.

APOLLO. Think not that my sister is so delighted with these Scythians ! She so much abhors these massacres, that she has made up her mind to go away with the first Grecian that chance shall bring to Tauris.²

BACCHUS. There she is right ! But to return to Priapus, of whom I must tell you something very diverting. Lately happening to be at Lampsacus,³ I took up my quarters with him ; he gave me the best entertainment his means could afford, and at length we retired to rest,

¹ That is, according to the current report, she had Amor by Mars, Hermaphroditus by Mercury, and Priapus by Bacchus.

² Alluding to the story of Orestes, who came to Tauris, and carried away his sister Iphigenia, who was Diana's priestess there, at the same time with the image of the goddess. See Euripid., *Iphig. in Tauris*.

³ A Grecian city in Mysia on the shore of the Hellespont, which boasted of being the birthplace of this god, and therefore paid him peculiar honours.

after a plentiful compotation. About midnight my noble host rose up ; and—I am ashamed to proceed.

APOLLO. I understand.—And what did you ?

BACCHUS. What should I do ? I laughed at him.

APOLLO. That was right of you, not to take the matter seriously, and make a noise about it. It was pardonable in him to try his luck with one so handsome as you are.

BACCHUS. He would have had more reason to do you so much honour, Apollo ; your beauty and your golden locks, would have pleaded his excuse, though sober.

APOLLO. That he would not be greatly inclined to Dionysus : I wear besides my fine curls, a bow and arrows at his service.

XXIV

MERCURY PEEVISHLY COMPLAINS OF HIS HARD FATE

MERCURY MAIA

MERCURY. Mother, in all heaven is there so wretched a god as I ?

MAIA. Talk not thus unbecomingly, my son !

MERCURY. What, mother ! must not I dare to speak, I who am thus eternally plagued with so many different employments, always working alone, fatigued and worried without respite in all

manner of servile offices. I must rise early in the morning, and no sooner am I up but I have to prepare the breakfast table ; that is my first business : then I have to sweep out the parlour, and lay the cushions in the council chamber. When all this is arranged in proper order, then I must wait upon Jupiter, and run backwards and forwards, to and fro, up and down, the whole day long, carrying his commands and messages all over the world. I am hardly arrived in heaven again, when, without being allowed time to wipe off the sweat and dust, I was forced to go and serve out the ambrosia ; till Ganymede came up,¹ I had likewise to hand about the nectar. But what is most intolerable of all, is, that I am the only one of all the gods, that has no rest even of nights ; for then I must conduct the souls of the dead to Pluto, and be present at their trials. It is not enough, that I am all day long acting as fencing-master, herald, and professor of rhetoric,² and distracted by so many different employments, but while others are asleep I have the task imposed on me of looking after the dead ! The sons of Leda³ relieve one

¹ In the original : “ before this newly purchased cup-bearer came.” This refers to the gratuity, given by Jupiter to Tros, the father of young Ganymede, in consideration of the loss of his son, of a set of immortal horses, as appears from Homer. *Iliad*, lib. v. ver. 265, 266.

² Because the gladiators, the heralds or caduceatores, and the orators regarded him as their patron and protector.

³ Castor and Pollux. See *Dial.* xxvi.

another alternately, and while one passes his day with the dead, the other enjoys himself in heaven ;¹ whereas I am obliged day after day to be in both places. The sons of Alcmena and Semele, who were only wretched mortal women, yet take their seats and solace at their ease at the table of the gods ; whilst I, the son of Maia and grandson of Atlas, must wait upon them ! I am but just returned from the sister of Cadmus, at Sidon, to inquire how she did, on the part of Jupiter ; and without giving me time to breathe, he hurries me off to Argos, upon another visit to Danaë, “and as you return through Bœotia,” says he, “call by the way for a moment on Antiope.” The short of the matter is, I can hold out no longer ! If by any means I could make it possible, I would with pleasure be sold to some man upon earth, to be employed in the meanest and most servile offices.

MAIA. Let us have no more of this, child ! It is your duty to obey your father in whatever he pleases to order, especially as you are so young. Then haste away to Argos and thence to Bœotia, as you are bid, or you may get a good beating for your negligence ; for lovers are apt to be cholerick.

¹ At least this is the meaning of Mercury's words, who here (probably from his strong feelings of anger) expresses himself with not sufficient perspicuity.

XXV

PHAETON

JUPITER HELIOS

JUPITER. What have you done, you wickedest of all the Titans ! The whole earth is nearly destroyed, by your trusting your chariot to a heedless boy ; he has burnt one half of it, by going too near it, and the other is perishing with cold, because he kept at too great a distance from it. In short, he has thrown all into confusion and ruin, and had I not in time perceived what was going forward, and dashed him down from the chariot with my thunderbolt, there would not have been a bone remaining of the whole human race ; such a sober coachman have you sent out with your chariot !

HELIOS. I am in fault, Jupiter ; but be not so very angry at my having yielded to the instant request of a son ! How could I imagine that such a misfortune would come of it ?

JUPITER. You ought to have known what dexterity it requires to conduct such a charge, and that only to drive a little on one side is all that is necessary to ruin everything. Were you ignorant of the furious impetuosity of your horses, and what strength it requires to curb them in, and how careful you must be to keep a tight rein ? for if they once feel it relax they are under no control. You have seen a proof

of it in this young harebrain, with whom they ran away, now up, now down, now to the right, now to the left, now even in the most contrary directions, he being quite at a loss how to govern them.

HELIOS. I was sensible of all this. And, aware that I could not trust the chariot to his guidance, I resisted his importunity a long time ; but at last, adding tears to his intreaties, and his mother Clymene leaguings with him so impetuously in the attack, they extorted my consent. On seating him however in the chariot I gave him special instructions for his government, how he should fix himself so as to keep a steady command, how far he might give the rein in ascending, and how he then should tend downwards, and how he was to manage so as always to keep master of the bridle, and to direct such fiery coursers ; I told him likewise the danger of not driving constantly straight forwards. But indeed it is extremely natural that one so young as he, on seeing himself surrounded by so much fire, and looking down on the immense abyss, should lose his head ; and that the steeds, as soon as they perceived that they had not their accustomed driver, should have despised the boy, and, running away with him, have created all this mischief. The poor youth, I suppose for fear of falling, let go the reins, and clung fast to the chariot. But we are both sufficiently punished, Jupiter ; he by his death,

and I by the affliction into which that has plunged me.¹

JUPITER. Sufficiently punished, say you, for such a heinous atrocity ? However for this once I pardon you ; but if ever hereafter you are guilty of the like again, by employing such a substitute, you shall presently see how much hotter the fire of my lightning is than yours !—In the meantime let his sisters bury him, on the bank of the Eridanus, where he fell from the chariot, weeping tears of amber over him, and be transformed through grief into poplars. Do you immediately repair your chariot ; for the pole is broke, and one of the wheels is shattered : then put the horses to, and drive on ! But remember what I have said to you.

XXVI

CASTOR AND POLLUX

APOLLO MERCURY

APOLLO. Can you tell me, Mercury, which of these two is Castor and which Pollux ? For I see nothing to distinguish them by.

MERCURY. He that spent the day with us yesterday was Castor, and this now here is Pollux.

APOLLO. But how do you know them one from the other, since they are so alike ?

MERCURY. By the scars which this has on the

¹ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* xxi.

face, from the wounds he received from his antagonists in boxing, particularly from Amycus, the prince of the Bebrycians, when he sailed with Jason to Colchis. Whereas the face of the other is free from blemish, and quite smooth.

APOLLO. I am much obliged to you for removing my difficulty in this particular : because in everything else, the half egg upon the head,¹ the star above it,² the javelin in the hand, and the white horse on which they are mounted, gives them such a complete resemblance, that in addressing them I have frequently called Castor Pollux and Pollux Castor. Now explain to me one thing more. Whence is it that they are never both together with us at the same time, but make their visit by turns, in such sort that one is alternately to-day a god, and to-morrow down among the dead ?

MERCURY. Their extraordinary fraternal affection produced this effect. For, as it could not be otherwise than that one of Leda's sons should be mortal, and the other immortal, they have in this manner shared the immortality between them.

¹ The Spartan hat or helmet, by which, as native Spartans, and subsequently the tutelar deities of that republic, they were always designated.

² This star over the hat is likewise a constant attribute of these two demi-gods on the Lacedemonian coins and other monuments : on the former are frequently found simply the two hats with the stars over them, as the symbol of the Dioscures and the Spartan Republic.

APOLLO. In this they have not acted discreetly methinks ; for in pursuance of this partition, one of them is always living with the gods, when the other is among the dead, so that they can never get a sight of one another ; and yet this perhaps was what they were most desirous of. Besides, as I prophesy, Æsculapius cures, you teach wrestling, and are an excellent fencing master, Diana practises midwifery, and all the rest of us exercise some arts useful to the gods or to mankind : what kind of office have these two got ? Or are they to idle away their time in doing nothing but handing about nectar and ambrosia to us, great lubbers as they are ?

MERCURY. By no means ; they are engaged in the service of Neptune ; to parade upon the sea, and wherever they see a mariner in danger, to sit upon the shrouds and conduct the ship safe into harbour.

APOLLO. Now you say something, Mercury : I am glad to hear of their being so usefully and honourably employed !

DIALOGUES OF THE SEA GODS



LOVE OF THE CYCLOPS POLYPHEMUS FOR
THE NEREID GALATEA

DORIS GALATEA

DORIS. YOUR beautiful lover, Galatea, the delicate Sicilian swain, they say is distractedly enamoured of you.

GALATEA. None of your raillery, Doris,¹ on my lover ; let him be as he may, he is however a son of Neptune.

DORIS. Well ! and if he were Jupiter's son, wild and shaggy as he looks, and what is more ghastly still, with his one eye above his nose,

¹ The Doris of this conversation is not the mother of the Nereids, but one of her daughters, who bore the name of her mother. Doris and Galatea are therefore sisters.

what benefit would accrue to his beauty from his high descent ?

GALATEA. Wild and shaggy as you may think him, and which renders him so hideous in your eyes, it does not ill become him ; it gives him a masculine, majestic appearance. Even his one eye produces a fine effect upon his forehead, and he sees no less with it than with two eyes.

DORIS. Ah then by what you say, I have been misinformed : instead of Polyphemus being your lover, you are in love with him.

GALATEA. Not that neither : I only cannot bear that sarcastic, censorious humour in you. But I perceive that what you say proceeds from sheer envy. When lately looking down from his rocks, he saw our sports at the foot of Etna, he did not deign to take notice of you, while he directed his eye to me, as the handsomest of the company. That it is that vexes you ; as it is a proof that I am more amiable than you, for as soon as he saw me, he paid no regard to the rest of you.

DORIS. Then you suppose yourself very enviable, because a purblind shepherd thinks you handsome ? And what after all could he find to praise in you except your white skin ? I suppose because it is the colour of his milk and his cheese, and he fancies everything that resembles them must be beautiful. But if you would know, how little you have to pride yourself upon respecting all things else, only stoop over one of the rocks,

and look down upon the water when the sea is perfectly calm ; and you will see that this flat milky hue is all the beauty you have ; but who would praise that, unless it be animated with an agreeable red ?

GALATEA. Notwithstanding my whiteness I have at least found a lover ! Not one of you can boast of ever having her praises sung by a shepherd, or a sailor or even a ferryman. But my Polyphemus, beside his other accomplishments, is musical.

DORIS. Oh, no more of his music, I pray you ! We have heard him sing, when he came to junket with you the other day. So Venus be propitious to me, we thought we heard an ass braying ! And his fiddle ; it was to be sure a famous article ! The bare skull of a stag ; the antlers represented the two side pieces ; at top he had inserted a bridge, across which the chords were stretched without tuning-pegs ; and now he pinched out of it at a venture a horrid confusion of sounds, unconcerned whether the discord accorded with his squalling, and not observing that his apology for a lyre rebellowed differently from what he howled.¹ It was impossible to have done laughing ; it was so melodious that even Echo, fond as she is of chattering, reverberated not a sound,

¹ This passage corroborates what is shewn in numberless quotations from the ancients ; that their ordinary accompaniments, consisted entirely in pitching the melody of the voice in unison with the instrument, or perhaps an octave lower or higher.

as if ashamed of repeating such harsh and ridiculous singsong. Yet this was not all. The precious creature carried in his arms a bear's cub,¹ almost as rough and uncouth as himself, of which probably he intended to make a present, as a mark of his gallantry, to you, instead of a lapdog. Who would not envy you, Galatea, such a lover ?

GALATEA. Well ; shew me yours then, Doris, who questionless is handsomer and sings more melodiously and plays better on the guitar !

DORIS. I have no lover ; nor do I pretend to so much beauty that everyone must fall in love with me. Do you keep your Cyclops, who diffuses such an agreeable goatish odour around him, and devours without cooking strangers who enters his premises ! I wish you good luck with him ; and may you return his love as tenderly, as you are beloved by him ! ²

¹ This Cyclopiian characteristic is likewise borrowed from Theocritus, *loc. cit.* ver. 41. Theocritus speaks of four young bears ; Ovid (*Metam.* lib. xiii. fab. 8) reduces them to two ; our author justly thought that one was sufficient to supply the place of a lapdog.

² Doris envies her sister, not on account of the Cyclops, but of the lover ; Galatea is not in love with the Cyclops, but it flatters her vanity to have turned the head of a lover, though he were only a Cyclops ; and now the magic of self-love operates in behalf of the lover, and the Cyclops is proportionately less Cyclops the more she surrenders herself to the pleasure of the triumph over her sisters and playmates, to whom she is beholden for his love. All this is real nature, and is delineated by Lucian in this graceful little picture, with touches of the pencil, no less easy, than bold and vigorous.

II

POLYPHEMUS'S ADVENTURE WITH ULYSSES

POLYPHEMUS NEPTUNE

POLYPHEMUS. Father Neptune, do but see how I have been served by that cursed stranger. He first made me drunk ; then assaulting me in my sleep, put my eye out.

NEPTUNE. Who was it, Polyphemus, that durst do this ?

POLYPHEMUS. At first he said his name was Nobody ; but as soon as he was off the ground, and out of reach of the huge stone that I threw after him, he called out to me, that his name was Ulysses.

NEPTUNE. I know your man ; it is the famous Ithacan. He was on his voyage back from Troy, when he visited you. But how came he to perpetrate this atrocious deed, as he was never reputed to be very bold and daring ?

POLYPHEMUS. Coming home from the pastures, I met a pack of strange fellows in my cave, probably with some nefarious design upon my sheep ; for after I had shut the cave with the great stone that serves me as a cover to the entrance, and kindled a fire with the wood I brought with me from the mountain, I observed that they were endeavouring to hide themselves. I therefore seized several of them by the head (as I had a right to do, since they were robbers) and

ate them up. In the meantime that cunning arch-scoundrel Nobody, or Ulysses, whichever is his name, gave me a confounded potion of a delicious taste and fragrant odour, but, as it proved by its effects, a dangerous poison : for it put all my senses in confusion ; after I had swallowed it everything seemed to turn round with me ; the whole cave stood topsy-turvy ; in short, I was no longer myself, and fell into a profound sleep. Whilst I was thus sleeping, he took a stake, sharpened it to a point, made it glowing hot, and poked it into my eye ; and ever since, Neptune, I have been as blind as you see me.

NEPTUNE. You must have slept soundly indeed, my son, not to have started up when the glowing stake touched your eye. But in what manner did Ulysses escape ? He could not possibly roll away the stone from the mouth of the cave.

POLYPHEMUS. I myself rolled it away, that I might be more sure of catching the rascal. I planted myself with outstretched arms before the entrance, letting pass only my sheep that must go to the meadows, and gave instructions to the ram, what he was to do in my place.

NEPTUNE. Aha ! I guess now that he slunk out under the ram. But you should have called together the rest of the Cyclops against him.

POLYPHEMUS. So I did, father, and they came ; but on their asking me how the thief was called that had played me such a trick, and on my

telling them Nobody, they thought me mad, and went about their business. Thus was I overreached by that execrable caitiff with his false name ! But what vexes me most, is, that he still laughs at my misfortune, and says, even my father Neptune will not soon cure me.

NEPTUNE. Be at ease, my son ; I will revenge you upon him. He shall soon learn, that though I cannot restore sight to blind eyes, I have the fates of sailors in my hands, and it is at my option entirely, whether I shall save them or sink them. He is not yet upon dry land !

III

LOVE OF ALPHEUS¹ FOR THE FOUNTAIN ARETHUSA

NEPTUNE ALPHEUS

NEPTUNE. What is the reason, Alpheus, that you are the only river, that after falling into the sea, you do not mingle with the salt water of it, as is the custom of all other rivers, but flow as it

¹ Alpheus, a river in Arcadia, become famous through mythology and the poets, was as every river, a son of Oceanus and Tethys. He was in love with Arethusa, one of Diana's nymphs, who knew no other way of avoiding his artifices than by being metamorphosed by Diana into a fountain. Alpheus, desirous at least of uniting himself as a river with this fountain, flowed after her above and under the earth, and even through the waves of the sea, till at length he reached her in Sicily, and obtained his darling wish.

were therein and preserve your stream always fresh, and continue your course untainted and pure ? One would imagine that you only dive like the gulls and herons, and come up again into daylight.

ALPHEUS. That I must own, Neptune, is a love-secret. You will pardon me therefore, as you yourself are no stranger to that passion.

NEPTUNE. Is your beloved a mortal or a nymph, or may she be one of the Nereids ?

ALPHEUS. Not one of all the three ; she is a fountain, Neptune.

NEPTUNE. And in what part of the world does she flow ?

ALPHEUS. She inhabits an island in Sicily, and her name is Arethusa.

NEPTUNE. I know this Arethusa, my dear Alpheus ; she is not ugly ; on the contrary, she splashes, as clear and transparent as crystal, from a fine sandy bottom, and her stream rippling gracefully over the pebbles shines like pure silver.

ALPHEUS. I see you are very well acquainted with her, Neptune ; to her therefore I am now going.

NEPTUNE. Go then in peace, and be happy in your love ! Only tell me this one thing more, how could you get a sight of Arethusa, you being an Arcadian and she a Syracusan ?

ALPHEUS. I am in haste, Neptune, and you detain me with impertinent questions.

NEPTUNE. That is true. Therefore post away without any further hindrance from me, to your

beloved, and dive and rise again from the sea at pleasure; and may you in reciprocal flowing mingle sources with your beloved, and continue to flow with her in one stream in the same bed for ever!

IV

DOUBT OF AN INCREDULOUS EYE-WITNESS ON
AN INCREDIBLE MIRACLE

MENELAUS PROTEUS

MENELAUS. That you can turn yourself into water, Proteus, is not quite incomprehensible, since you were formerly of a watery nature; or into a tree, I will also let that pass; even the transformation into a lion is not absolutely incredible: but how it should be possible, for one that lives in the bosom of the ocean, to become fire, surprises me greatly, and to speak honestly—I do not believe it.

PROTEUS. You need not be surprised, Menelaus, for it is customary with me.

MENELAUS. Yes, I have seen it; but by your leave, I fancy there may be some juggle concealed behind the thing; and in short that you have the art of deceiving the eyes of the beholder, without really and in earnest becoming fire.

PROTEUS. But how were deception practicable in a fact so clear and evident to the senses? Have not you seen with open eyes into what shapes I have converted myself? If however you will not

trust that sense, but still fancy that I presented an empty figure before your eyes, nothing is easier; my worthy sir, than to come at the truth : only, when I am fire, stretch out your hand to me, and you will soon feel whether I only appear to be fire, but whether I likewise can burn.

MENELAUS. The experiment, Proteus, is a little hazardous.

PROTEUS. You may probably never in your life have seen a polypus, nor know what a singular property that fish has ?

MENELAUS. A polypus I have seen, but the peculiar property you speak of, I would gladly know.

PROTEUS. It consists in this, that he always assumes the colour of the rock, to which by his arms and antennæ he clings, so that he deceives the fishers, by reason that they cannot discern him from the rock, and therefore eludes their observation.

MENELAUS. So it is said : but your gift of transformation far surpasses that in incomprehensibility.

PROTEUS. If you will not believe your own eyes, I know not whom you would believe.

MENELAUS. It is true, I have seen it with my seeing eyes : but—it is nevertheless marvellously strange and unaccountable, that the very same thing should be both fire and water !

V

A NEREID RELATES TO HER SISTER WHAT
OCCURRED AT THE NUPTIALS OF THETIS

PANOPE GALENE

PANOPE. Did you see, Galene, the disturbance Eris made yesterday at the nuptial feast in Thessaly, because she was not invited ?

GALENE. I was not there, Panope : Neptune had commissioned me in the meantime to keep the sea calm.¹ But what then could Eris do, since she was not present ?

PANOPE. Thetis and Peleus had just been conducted by Amphitrite and Neptune into the bridal chamber, and the guests in the meantime gave themselves up to merriment ; some drank, others danced, others again were listening to Apollo's lyre, others to the singing of the Muses. Nothing therefore was easier than for Eris to take her revenge without being observed by any. She threw a wonderfully fine golden apple among the guests, bearing the inscription : *Let the fairest take it* ; and the apple continued rolling on, till, as if designedly, it came to the place where Juno, Venus, and Minerva were seated. Mercury having picked it up, and read aloud the inscription, we

¹ Alluding to the proper interpretation of her name, which implies the calm of the sea. In the list given by Hesiod of the Nereids (*Theogony*, ver. 243) Galene is the seventh : but Apollodorus, Hyginus, and Homer have her not at all in their registers.

Nereids kept ourselves as still as mice : for what had we to do, while they were present ? They now, each of the three, claimed the apple ; and disputed so eagerly, that if Jupiter had not interposed, they would certainly have proceeded to actual hostilities. The goddesses urged him to be their arbitrator ; but he would have nothing to do with it. Go to Ida, said he, to the son of Priam ; he is the fittest to find out the fairest : he is a lover and a judge of beauty, and you may safely rely upon his judgment.

GALENE. What said the goddesses to that, Panope ?

PANOPE. To-day I think they set out for Ida, and we shall soon get the intelligence, who gained the prize.

GALENE. As Venus is with them, certainly none other than she ; or the judge must have very bad eyes.

VI

THE RAPE OF AMYMON

TRITON NEPTUNE AMYMON

TRITON. Noble commander, Neptune, there comes every day a wondrous nice girl with a pitcher on her head to Lerna ; I do not know that I ever saw a handsomer lass.

NEPTUNE. Is she free-born, or a slave appointed to carry water ?

TRITON. Nothing less than that ; she is one of the fifty daughters of Danaus,¹ whom you know, and calls herself Amymone ; for I inquired after her name and family. This Danaus keeps his daughters exceedingly strict ; they are obliged to do all the domestic drudgery with their own hands, and he even sends them out with the water-jug ; in short he brings them up to habits of general industry.

NEPTUNE. And does the maid come the whole way from Argos to Lerna alone ? ²

TRITON. Quite alone ; there is a great want of water at Argos, you know ; they are forced to fetch it from a distance.

NEPTUNE. By what you say of this young girl you affect me strangely. Let us go and get a sight of her.

¹ Danaus and Egyptus (says the mythology) were twin sons of the Egyptian king Belus. Their father divided his kingdom between them ; but Egyptus chose rather to have it all alone, and thought the surest way to obtain it would be by marrying his fifty sons with the fifty daughters of his brother. The latter not being inclined to the proposal, he saw himself necessitated to take ship with his fifty daughters, and go to seek his fortune elsewhere. After various adventures, they at last came to Argos, and found means to conquer that petty territory, or kingdom as it was then called.

² The swamp Lerna, whither these princesses daily went to fetch water, was forty stadia distant from Argos ; and therefore if we allow them to have taken, agreeably to the custom of the heroic age, pretty long steps, they had to travel at least two good hours with their pitchers.

TRITON. I am ready to attend you. It is just her time; she will be now about half-way to Lerna.

NEPTUNE. Let the horses be put to my car immediately—but no; that will take up too much time in harnessing and preparing—fetch me rather one of the fleetest dolphins; that I think will be the speediest way of reaching the place.

TRITON. Here is the swiftest of all the dolphins at your service.

NEPTUNE. That is well; now I mount; and you, Triton, swim beside me.—Now, that we are arrived at Lerna, I will lurk in ambush somewhere here, and you keep a good look out, and when you see her coming——

TRITON. There she is, quite near!

NEPTUNE. A handsome girl, Triton, a charming girl! We must seize upon her!

AMYMONE. Fellow, why do you meddle with me? Where are you going to carry me? You are a kidnapper! You look as if you were sent by my uncle Egyptus to convey me away. I will call my father.

TRITON. Hush, Amymone! It is Neptune.

AMYMONE. Talk not to me of Neptune!—What! do you use violence, man? Do you want to drown me? Ah, me! I shall be suffocated in the water!

NEPTUNE. Fear not; no harm shall come to you! With my trident I will cause a spring to

issue from the rock, that shall bear your name,¹ and you shall happily be the only one of all your sisters not doomed after death to draw water.

VII

IO

NOTUS ZEPHYRUS

NOTUS. Yon heifer, that Mercury is conducting by sea to—Egypt is that the same which Jupiter admired so much, say you ?

ZEPHYRUS. None other, my dear Notus ; but indeed she was not a heifer then, but the daughter of the river Inachus. Her present form Juno gave her out of jealousy, on perceiving that Jupiter was so exceedingly enamoured with her.

NOTUS. Does he admire her still since she is become a cow ?

ZEPHYRUS. Very much. He has therefore sent her to Egypt, and ordered us to keep the sea quiet, till she has swam across, in order that when she shall be delivered there (for she is in a hopeful condition) she shall be a goddess and her son a god.

NOTUS ! That heifer a goddess !

¹ This consolatory circumstance is a part of the legend of the fair Amydone ; Neptune thought, by limpid spring water, instead of the marshy, with which she was hitherto forced to be content, to have amply compensated her for what he had robbed her of.

ZEPHYR. Certainly ! and Mercury says she is to be a tutelar goddess of mariners, and our mistress, so that every one of us is to blow or not to blow just as she pleases.

NOTUS. Then we should pay our court to her betimes, Zephyr, since the thing is now as good as done.

ZEPHYR. By Jupiter, it is the way to render her more benign.—But see ! the voyage is over, she is already arrived and has swam ashore. Look, already she has done walking on all fours, and what a fine stately dame Mercury has made of her !

NOTUS. These are wonderful events, dear Zephyr ! Horns, tail and cloven feet, all gone at once, and the heifer is a charming maid. But what ails Mercury, that he has changed his comely youthful countenance for a dog's face ?

ZEPHYR. Let us not trouble our heads about that ; he must know best what he has to do.

VIII

ARION¹

NEPTUNE *A Chorus of* DOLPHINS

NEPTUNE. You do well, ye dolphins, in being so friendly to mankind ; and I commend you

¹ ARION. The subject of this Dialogue is taken from a well-known story of Herodotus in the 23rd and 24th chapters of his *Clio*.

for it. Already in the old times, when the son of Ino, with his mother, plunged down from the Scironian rocks headlong into the sea, you took him upon your back, and carried him to the isthmus; as you recently took up the citharæus¹ of Methymna, and conveyed him in all his ornature, together with his lyre, to the Cape of Tænarus; when but for your assistance he could not have avoided the destruction the malicious mariners intended for him.

DOLPHIN. Be not surprised that we are kind to man, since we from men were turned into fishes.²

NEPTUNE. For that reason I take it very ill of Bacchus, that after having obtained a victory over you in the sea-fight, contrary to his usual practice, he acted with so much arrogance. But what is the adventure of this Arion, my dear Dolphin?

DOLPHIN. Periander, I believe, was very much attached to him on account of his talent, and sent for him often to hear his music; to be brief, he enriched himself in the service of that prince, and now requested of him permission to take a voyage to Methymna, in order to make a display of his

¹ The Citharædi were different from the Citharistes. The latter only played upon the instrument: the former were singers, who accompanied themselves upon the cithara.

² That is, they were Tyrrhene pirates, who had got Bacchus, with his *troupe joyeuse* into their power, but soon by signs and wonders had proof of his divinity, and were metamorphosed by him into dolphins.

wealth to his countrymen. To this end therefore he went on board a small vessel, which unhappily was manned by a crew of villains. He having been foolish enough to let them know that he had a quantity of gold and silver along with him, they, when about the middle of the Ægean sea, hatched a plot against his life. "Now then," said he, (for I swam so near to the ship, that I could hear everything,) "since I perceive your resolution is fixed, allow me only to put on my ornature, to sing my death-song, and then voluntarily plunge into the sea." No objection being made, he put on his trappings, played and sung a pleasing and affecting elegy, and cast himself overboard, certain of finding an instant death in the waves. But I took him upon my back, and swam with him to Tænarus.

NEPTUNE. Your love for music is very praiseworthy, and you well rewarded him for his fine singing.

IX

HELLE

NEPTUNE AMPHITRITE, *and other* NEREIDS

NEPTUNE. Henceforth let the streight in which the girl was lost, be named after her, the sea of Helle [Hellespont]. But bear her corpse, ye Nereids, to the coast of Troy, that it may be buried by her country-women.

AMPHITRITE. Not so, Neptune ! Let us bury her in the sea that bears her name. The poor girl suffered so much from her stepmother, that we pity her from our hearts.

NEPTUNE. What you propose, Amphitrite, cannot be ; neither would it be decent, to lay her anywhere under the sand ; therefore, as I said before, let her be properly interred on this or on the opposite shore ! Besides it will be no small comfort to her, that Ino will shortly encounter the same fate, and being pursued by the enraged Athamas, will be compelled to throw herself from the top of mount Cithæron into the sea.

AMPHITRITE. From respect to Bacchus, however, should not we save this Ino, as she was his nurse ?

NEPTUNE. Though she does not deserve it, on account of her ill-temper : yet, as you say, it would not be right not to oblige Bacchus in this.

A NEREID. But how came it then that poor Helle fell off the ram, while her brother Phryxus was conveyed safe and sound ?

NEPTUNE. That is easily to be accounted for ; her brother is a youth who has strength and fortitude to endure such a trip : whereas the girl, alarmed at the first thought of the perilous adventure ; and giddy with the dartlike velocity of the flight, when casting a sudden glance of the eye upon the horrid abyss beneath her, no more was wanting to complete the dizziness so as for an instant to let the horn of the ram by which she

had held slip out of her hand, and thus was precipitated into the sea.

THE NEREID. But should not her mother Nephele have gone to her assistance, when she saw the girl falling ?

NEPTUNE. She might indeed have attempted it ; but what could Nephele do to counteract the preponderant power of fate ?

X

WONDERFUL ORIGIN OF THE ISLE DELOS

IRIS NEPTUNE

IRIS. Neptune ! you are commanded by Jupiter to lift up and arrest that floating isle torn off from Sicily, which is now floating about under water, so that it may be conspicuous in the Ægean sea, and rest upon a permanent foundation.

NEPTUNE. It shall be done, Iris. But what use will it be of to him, when it is fixed and above water ?

IRIS. Latona is to be delivered of her burden on that isle ; and it is high time, for she has already strong symptoms.

NEPTUNE. Could not she then just as well be brought to bed in heaven ? Or, in case there be no room there, has not the earth sufficient space for her progeny ?

IRIS. No. Juno has bound the earth by a

solemn obligation to refuse the teeming Latona a place for that purpose. Fortunately this isle was not included in the oath, since it was then invisible.

NEPTUNE. Now I understand you — Halt, island ! Emerge from the sea, move about no longer, but fix immoveably, and receive into thy bosom, O happiest of isles, the twin children of my brother, the most beautiful of all the gods !—Ye Tritons, convey Latona hither ; let serenity rest upon the sea, and let every wave be smooth ! But as for the dragon, which has hitherto furiously pursued and frightened her from place to place, him shall the infants as soon as they are born persecute and avenge their mother.—Do you, Iris, inform Jupiter, that his orders are obeyed. Delos stands fixt ; Latona may come and bring forth when she will.

XI

COMIC REPRESENTATION OF AN HOMERICAL FICTION

XANTHUS THALASSA ¹

XANTHUS. Take me up, Thalassa ! I have been horribly treated ! Soothe my burning wounds, I beseech you !

¹ Xanthus and Thalassa. Thalassa means properly in Greek the sea ; here however Thalassa being introduced by Lucian as a person, and made the grandmother of Achilles, he seems to have taken it for the same person, with Thetis,

THALASSA. What is the matter with you, Xanthus ? Who has burnt you so sadly ?

XANTHUS. Vulcan.—Woe and alas ! I am almost burnt up to a cinder ! I am in a perfect glow.

THALASSA. But why did he set you so on fire ?

XANTHUS. To gratify the son of Thetis. When I saw the cruel slaughter he made among the poor Scythians, I earnestly implored him to abate his wrath : and because he would not mind me, but continued to choak up my channel with carcasses, I at last, in compassion to the poor wretches, threatened to drown him ; but solely in a view to frighten him, and obtain a breathing time for the harassed Trojans. All at once Vulcan,¹ who happened to be in the vicinity, came down upon me with all the fire, I believe, he is master of, and all that he could scrape together from Ætna and the whole world, and scorched my

the wife of Oceanus, as this with Pontus ; though by others they are discriminated. Xanthus was a small river, falling into the sea in the territory of Troy, and has obtained through Homer a greater reputation than it deserves. Hesiod makes him a son of Oceanus and Thetis, Hyginus the son of Pontus and Thalassa, which in reality is just the same. His proper name was Scamander ; the gods however, says Homer, *Iliad*, xx. 74, call him Xanthus. The lamentable catastrophe to which this dialogue relates is described by Homer with all its concomitant circumstances in the 21st book of the *Iliad*.

¹ Vulcan sided with the Greeks, and had previously leagued with Xanthus when the gods of both parties were come to blows. *Iliad*, xx. 73, 74.

tamarisks and elms, roasted my unfortunate fish and my fine eels, made myself boil over so furiously, that within a very little he has left me quite dry. However, you see by the blains and scalds with which I am covered, what I must suffer.

THALASSA. You are indeed very turgid and hot ; and how should it be otherwise, since you are so encumbered with bleeding carcasses, and, as you say, have sustained such an inflammation ? But you are rightly served, Xanthus ! Why did you violently rush upon my nephew, not considering that he is the son of a Nereid ?

XANTHUS. Was it not then my duty to espouse the cause of my poor neighbours, the Phrygians ?

THALASSA. And ought not Vulcan to have espoused the cause of his old friend Thetis ?

XII

DANAË

DORIS THETIS

DORIS. Why do you weep so, Thetis ?

THETIS. My dear Doris, I just now saw a most beautiful young creature, with her newborn son cast into the sea. Her father Acrisius¹ having ordered both mother and infant to be put in a

¹ King of Argos, grandson of Lynceus and the Danaid Hypermnestra.

chest, conveyed them a good way out upon the sea, and there let them down into the water, that they might both perish.

DORIS. And why did he so, sister ? For you seem to be acquainted with the whole affair.

THETIS. Acrisius had doomed his daughter, notwithstanding her extraordinary beauty, to a perpetual virginity,¹ and therefore kept her shut up in a brazen apartment ; and they say, whether true or false I know not, that Jupiter, having metamorphosed himself into a golden shower, poured down upon her through the roof : that Danaë, having unconsciously received the flowing god into her lap, in consequence became pregnant. The father, an austere and morose old churl, on perceiving it fell into a violent rage, and, imagining that she had certainly been seduced by somebody, as soon as she was well enough from her labour, threw her, babe and all, into this chest.

DORIS. But how did she behave upon being let down into the sea ?

THETIS. With regard to herself she was silent, and patiently submitted to her hard fate : but for the life of her son she fervently implored, holding him out with cries and sobs to the grandfather, in hopes that he might be moved by the beauty of the infant, who, ignorant of his own misfortune, innocently smiled at the waves to

¹ It having been predicted, that he would be put to death by a son of his daughter.

which he was condemned to become a prey. I cannot refrain from tears at the bare recollection.

DORIS. You make my heart melt within me. Are they then both dead ?

THETIS. No. The chest is floating about the isle Seryphos,¹ and they are still alive.

DORIS. Why then do we not haste to save them, and bid the fishermen, employed yonder on the shore, to cast a net for them ? and by that means infallibly draw them out, and they will be preserved.

THETIS. A good thought ! Let us do so. It would be a shocking calamity if she and the beautiful infant were to be lost !

XIII

TYRO

ENIPEUS NEPTUNE

ENIPEUS. It was not fair of you, Neptune, if I may speak the truth, to assume my likeness, and seduce my favourite.² The poor girl took you

¹ A small island in the Ægean sea, or Grecian Archipelago, now named Serpho or Serfanto.

² Tyro, a daughter of the King of Elis, Salmoneus, was in love, while a very young girl, with the river Enipeus, but who, as it seems, cared little about her, and thereby gave Neptune an opportunity of assuming his form and availing himself of the kind disposition of the young princess. This was attended with such good success, that the fair Tyro was in due time delivered of twins, of whom afterwards one

for me, otherwise she would never have been brought to compliance.

NEPTUNE. You deserved no better ; you were so cold and haughty as to regard with disdain a girl that comes down to you day after day, and is almost dying for love of you, and who suffers so much and does all she can for your sake. The poor thing wanders so sorrowfully up and down your coast, descends so frequently to bathe in your waters, and longs so earnestly for your embraces ; and you treat her with indifference !

ENIPEUS. And does that give you a right to corrupt her under my form, to entice my love away from me, by imposing upon the simple, unsuspecting Tyro ?

NEPTUNE. Your jealousy comes now too late, my good Enipeus ; you should not have acted so haughtily and scornfully. Besides, Tyro has suffered no wrong, since she took him, for whom she undid her girdle, for her lover.

ENIPEUS. As if you yourself at going away did not tell her who you were ! It was just that

named Pelias was established at Iolcos, and the other, Neleus, at Pylos, suitably to their rank. The relation that Tyro's departed soul gives to Ulysses of it, in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, seems to have led our author to the idea of giving this comic turn to the affair ; since it is certainly very conformable to nature, that Enipeus, cold as he had been towards the fair Tyro, should nevertheless have felt himself highly affronted by the little liberty which Neptune had taken with her under his form.

which most grieved her. And you must own that you have done me an injury, by appropriating to yourself by stealth, the joys that were intended for me, and under the purple flood, which concealed you both,¹ possessed my right in the beloved maid.

NEPTUNE. You might have possessed it, Enipeus, but you refused.

XIV

ANDROMEDA AND PERSEUS

A TRITON IPHIANASSA DORIS *and other*
NEREIDS

THE TRITON. You Nereids, the cetus, that monster which you let loose upon the daughter of Cepheus, Andromeda, has not only, contrary to your expectation, done the maid no harm, but is itself slain.

A NEREID. By whose hand, Triton? Did Cepheus only propose the maid as a bait to him, and then from a covert rush out upon him with a superior force and kill him?

TRITON. No. But, Iphianassa, you remember Perseus, the son of Danaë, whose life out of compassion you saved, when he with his mother was inclosed in a chest, by his grandfather, and cast upon the sea?

¹ Alluding to the passage in Homer, *Odyss.* xi. 242, 243.

IPHIANASSA. Perfectly well ; he must now be grown up and a handsome brave young man.

TRITON. He it is who has slain your cetus.

IPHIANASSA. And what moved him to it, Triton ? He has badly testified his gratitude for that life which we preserved.

TRITON. I will tell you how it was. This Perseus took a journey to the Gorgons, whom the king of Seriphos had engaged him to subdue. Being now arrived in Lybia, at the place of their abode——

IPHIANASSA. How, Triton, alone ? or had he auxiliaries with him ? For unless he had, it were a perilous journey to undertake !

TRITON. He travelled through the air. Minerva provided him with wings for that purpose. On his arrival, he found the Gorgons, I think, sleeping : he therefore cut off Medusa's head, and brought it away with him.

IPHIANASSA. But how was that possible, since the Gorgons cannot be looked upon, or whoever looks on them will never look more ?

TRITON. Minerva held her shield before him.—So at least I heard him relate the affair to Cepheus, and afterwards to Andromeda.—Minerva therefore shewed him in her bright polished shield the figure of Medusa as in a looking-glass ; and now, still fixing his eyes on the reflected image, he with the left hand seized the Gorgon by the hair, and with the sabre in his right cut off her head, and flew away with it before her sisters



PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA

were awake. Then, flying along the coast of Ethiopia, he descried Andromeda riveted to a rock protruding far into the sea, with dishevelled hair, and naked to below the girdle. Gods, how beautiful he thought her ! His first sentiment was pity for her fate ; he inquired after the occasion of her punishment : but his pity imperceptibly grew into love (for it was decreed that the maid should be preserved !) and he resolved on her deliverance. He accordingly prepared himself for the onset ; and as the monster came up to Andromeda with open jaws instantaneously to swallow her, the youth raising himself a little in the air, with one hand he held the sabre and smote him, while with the other he converted him into stone by holding before him the head of Medusa. The cetus therefore died upon the spot ; the greater part of his body, so much namely of him as was facing the Gorgon, being suddenly petrified. Perseus directly loosed the chains of the virgin, supported her with his arm, as she came on tip-toe down the steep and slippery rock, where she was at every step in danger of sliding and falling into the depths below, and now he is celebrating his nuptials with her, and will speedily carry her home to Argos : so that Andromeda, instead of the death that was designed for her, has found a husband of no common stamp.

IPHIANASSA. I am not sorry that the affair has taken this turn. For after all, how can the innocent girl help it, that her mother once opened

smooth and unruffled as a meadow. We all held our breaths, and followed as silent spectators at a distance. Before them flew myriads of cupids, so near to the surface, that sometimes their toes feathered the water, having torches in their hands and chanting hymeneals. The Nereids rising from the water, mostly half naked, rode upon the backs of dolphins on either side, and clapped their hands for joy. The Tritons also and the other inhabitants of the sea, that were not of frightful aspect, danced around the lovely maid. Aye, Neptune himself had ascended his car, with Amphitrite by his side, and exultingly went before, as if to smooth the way for his swimming brother. And, that nothing might be wanting, a couple of vigorous Tritons bore the goddess of love, recumbent in her shell, strewing flowers of every kind upon the bride. It was one continued procession from the coast of Phœnicia quite to Crete. They had scarcely landed on that island, when away went the bull, and Jupiter in his own form, taking Europa by the hand, led her, glowing with a delicious blush, and hardly daring to open her eyes, to the Dictæan cave;¹ for she now indeed perceived in

¹ Lucian probably feigned this circumstance, taking it for granted that Jupiter must have been familiarly acquainted with this cave, by reason of its having been his own birthplace; not aware that he thereby offended the good Gortynians, who in the time of Theophrastus (and why not in Lucian's?) shewed to strangers the identical fountain on the brink of which, and the very same plane-

what view she had been conveyed thither. This done, we all retired, some this way and some that upon the sea, and set about blowing and blustering as usual.

NOTUS. How happy you are, Zephyr, in having beheld all this ! I was obliged in the meantime to be feeding my eyes with griffins, elephants, and black men.

tree beneath the shade of which Jupiter loosed the girdle of the fair Europa ; asserting, as an irrefragable proof of it, that the said plane-tree has never shed its leaves from that very day.

**CHARON, OR THE
SURVEYORS GENERAL**



CHARON,¹ OR THE SURVEYORS GENERAL

MERCURY CHARON

MERCURY. What are you laughing at, Charon? and what is the meaning of your having abandoned your wherry and come up, you who are so little accustomed to this daylight, to mingle in the concerns of the upper world?

CHARON. A fancy took me, Mercury, to see what is the nature and complexion of human life, what are the pursuits of mankind, and what

¹ CHARON. One of the most ingenious of Lucian's compositions, which in some sort occupies the middle space between his Dialogues of the Gods and of the Dead, and may therefore be a proper substitute for a prologue to the latter.

those things may be, the loss whereof they all deplore, when they come to us ; for I have never yet ferried over one with dry eyes. I therefore requested leave of absence from Hades for only one day, like the Thessalian youth,¹ and so I am just risen into daylight. I am very fortunate in having met you here : for I hope you will not think it too much trouble, as I am a stranger in this country, to take me by the hand, and as you are here in a manner at home, to shew me everything that is worth seeing.

MERCURY. I have at present no time for it, dear ferryman ; for I am going to transact for Jupiter there, above, a particular business relating to human concerns ; he is apt to be hot, you know, and if I am caught loitering, may take it into his head to banish me for ever to the kingdom of darkness, and give me up entirely to you. Or perhaps even, as he lately served poor Vulcan, catch me up by one leg, and swing me over the sacred threshold of heaven, that a limping couple of cupbearers may afford the deities something to laugh at.

CHARON. How ? am I of so little value to you, that you would suffer me to wander about the earth without a guide, since we are such old friends, and day after day make the passage together with the souls that you attend upon ! It would be no more than becoming in you, son of Maia, to recollect, that I never stationed you

¹ Protesilaus. See the 23rd Dialogue of the Dead.

at the pump or ordered you to row : on the contrary, while, old as I am, I was obliged to labour with two oars at once, you with your broad shoulders, stretched at your length, lay snoring in the prow. Unless by chance you find some gossiping soul, with whom you can chatter during the whole trip. However, I conjure you by your father, my dear little Mercury, not to leave me in the lurch ! Come with me, and shew me piece by piece, whatever appears worthy of observation in human life, that when I go back I may say I have seen something. I am unaccustomed to the light : I should go groping about with tottering steps and blinking eyes, and either see nothing at all, or not know what I did see. Do me the favour, good Cyllenius ; I will be everlastingly grateful for it !

MERCURY. This business will not turn out well for me ; I already see coming towards me the slaps and cuffs that will be the wages of this perambulation. However, I must consent with as good a grace as I can : what can one do when urged by a friend with such pressing importunity ? To point out to you everything specifically, that is absolutely not possible : it would require several years, and for that neither of us have sufficient leisure. Jupiter would proclaim me all the world over as a run-away servant ; and your business would be quite at a stand, and it would be prejudicial to Pluto's empire, if in all that time you carried over no dead : the toll-gatherer

Æacus¹ would take it very ill, if for days and years not an obol came into his till. Let us consider then how best to provide for your seeing the chief things that are going on.

CHARON. That must be your care, Mercury : I am a stranger, and entirely ignorant of things above ground.

MERCURY. To bring the matter to a conclusion, Charon, we want only a lofty station for the purpose. If you dared to ascend into heaven, the business would be settled at once : because from thence, as from a watch-tower, you could survey everything conveniently. But now, it not being permitted you, as an inmate in the kingdom of the dead, to set foot in Jupiter's royal citadel, we must look about us for some high mountain.

CHARON. You know, Mercury, what I so frequently say to you, if, in our passage over the Styx, it happens to be stormy weather, a heavy gale blowing, and the sea running high, some of you who understand nothing of these matters, would have me to furl the sail, or let go the bow-line, or run right before the wind ; I however always bid them be quiet, as I must best know

¹ Æacus, formerly king of the isle of Ægina, executed (according to the mythology), together with Minos and Rhadamanthus, the judicial office over the dead as they arrived in the subterranean world. What private accounts Lucian had obtained, for making him receiver of the ferry-toll which the dead were obliged to pay for their transport across the Stygian lake, appears to be unknown.

what to do. So do you now what you judge best, as you are at present my steersman ; I shall behave like a mannerly passenger, sitting silent, and submissive to whatever you are pleased to direct.

MERCURY. You are right. I hope soon to find a proper station for us.—Stay, what do you think of Caucasus ? Or is Parnassus still higher ? Or is not Olympus here loftier than either ? But now we talk of Olympus a thought comes into my head, that would not be amiss ; but I shall want your assistance.

CHARON. Command me ; I will do all I can.

MERCURY. Homer the poet says, that the two sons of the giant Alœus, while yet in their boyhood, took a fancy to scale the heights of heaven ; to this end they tore up Ossa from its foundation, intending to set it upon Olympus, and then pile Pelion upon that, conceiving that by so doing it would be an easy matter to get into heaven. But though these young rogues met their merited chastisement as arch-impious villains ; yet we, who have no design to do anything injurious to the gods, why should not we put this thought into execution, and by heaping several mountains upon one another, procure a loftier pinnacle for our observations.

CHARON. But how shall we two be able to lift up Pelion or Ossa ?

MERCURY. Why not, Charon ? Do you imagine that we are weaker than those two young brats ? We, who besides are gods ?

CHARON. That is not the case. But the undertaking appears to me of such prodigious magnitude, that I cannot conceive how we could be able to bring it to effect.

MERCURY. That, my good Charon, is entirely owing to your being no scholar and no poet ; to the magnanimous Homer it would cost only a couple of verses to lift us up to heaven, so easy was it for him to set mountains upon one another. I am unable to conceive why it appears to you so extraordinary, since it cannot be unknown to you, that Atlas quite alone bears upon his shoulders the whole world, and therefore us also. You probably may have heard, that my brother Hercules once for a short space relieved this same Atlas, by taking the whole burden upon him, while he recovered his breath.

CHARON. Heard it I have, Mercury ; but whether it is true, that I shall leave to you and the poets.

MERCURY. As true as anything in the world, my dear Charon ; what reason could such wise men have for lying ? Therefore, to cut the matter short, let us first heave up Ossa, as directed by the great architect Homer, and then pile upon Ossa the fig-tree-covered Pelion !—Behold how easily and poetically we have accomplished our task. I will now climb up in a trice, and see if it is sufficient, or whether we must build higher. —Alas, alas ! we are still by far not high enough ! To the east appears Ionia and Lydia, to the west

nothing but Italy and Sicily, on the north side only the regions that lie between us and the Danube, and here before us Crete is the extremity of what we can see, and that not very clearly. Dear ferryman, we must still hoist up Cæta,¹ and then Parnassus on the top of the other mountains.

CHARON. As you please ; only have a care, that the work, if we carry it up beyond the due proportion, be not too weak to support itself, and suddenly tumble down and crush us in its fall.

MERCURY. Have only a good heart. There is no danger. Put Cæta here, and now I will roll Parnassus on the top of all.—Ha ! it is better now ! I see everything. Now do you come up.

CHARON. Lend me a hand, Mercury ; it is not easy to mount up this scaffold.

MERCURY. You wanted to see everything ! He that has such a passion for seeing must occasionally put up with a little danger and inconvenience. Only hold me fast by the hand, and mind how you set your foot !—Well done ! So then you are up. Now, seeing Parnassus is double-peaked, we will each of us take possession of one for himself. Look therefore round you, and observe whatever the view presents.

CHARON. I see a large tract of land, surrounded by an extensive morass, and mountains and

¹ A mountain situate between Macedonia and Thessaly. Mercury, as it appears, reckons firmly upon the facility, with Homer's assistance, of transporting mountains, for these mountains stand tolerably far asunder.

rivers greater than Cocytus and Periphlegethon, and everywhere little tiny men, and a sort of hollows or hives, where they probably dwell.

MERCURY. What you take for hollows are cities.

CHARON. Do you know, Mercury, that we have done nothing at all by bringing Parnassus with its Castalian fount, and Cæta and all the other mountains together, and after all our labour and toil we are not a hair the better ?

MERCURY. How so ?

CHARON. Because from such a height I can clearly discern nothing. My wish was, not barely to see cities and mountains as in a picture, but men individually, and what they do and what they say. For instance, as when we met, and you seeing me laugh, asked me what I laughed at, I had just heard somewhat that diverted me much.

MERCURY. And what was that ?

CHARON. One man was, I think, invited by another to take his meal with him the following day, who promised that he would certainly come ; while he was yet speaking, a tile fell from the roof upon his head, and struck him dead. I could not help laughing to see that the man could not keep his promise.—I think I will get farther down, that I may see and hear the better.

MERCURY. Remain quietly where you are. I will remove this difficulty, and by means of a little magical charm borrowed from Homer



THE WORLD OF MORTAL MEN

render you as sharp-sighted as you could desire. As I repeat the verses, settle the belief firmly in your head, that you now see everything in the clearest manner possible.

CHARON. Repeat.

MERCURY. Behold from dark'ning mists I clear
thy sight,
That men from Gods thou mayst
discern aright. *Iliad*, v. 127.

Well ! how fares it ? Do you see now ?

CHARON. Incomparably ! The famed Lynceus was a blind buzzard to me. You may immediately begin to instruct me, and answer the questions I shall put to you. Apropos : shall I interrogate you in homerical verses, that you may see I am not so unacquainted with his works, as you might perhaps imagine ?

MERCURY. But how came you to that acquaintance, as you have never been anything but a bargeman, and riveted to your oar ?

CHARON. See how disdainfully you always speak of my profession ? But for all that, it is not the less true that I retain in my memory many things that I heard him rhapsodize, when I was ferrying him over after his death. I shall not easily forget the storm that then came on us. He had just begun a song, not of the best augury to seafaring people, how Neptune compelled together the clouds and stirred up the sea with his trident, like a ladle in a porridge pot, and let loose all the tempestuous winds, and so forth : and

when he had worked up the sea to that pitch in his verses, there came over us suddenly such a darkness, and such a tremendous storm arose that it nearly upset our ship. Upon this the good poet fell sea-sick, and so violently that he brought up almost all his rhapsodies, and at last even Scylla and Charybdis and the huge Cyclops, with the fir-tree in his hand which he had torn up by the roots for a walking-stick.

MERCURY. It is no wonder that from so copious an evacuation you have retained some verses.

CHARON. Tell me therefore :

What man of might is that, so big, so tall,
By head and shoulders overtopping all ?

Iliad, iii. 226.

MERCURY. That is the athlete Milo of Crotona, and the Grecians are giving him claps of applause, because he has just taken an ox upon his shoulders, and carried it along the middle of the stadium.¹

CHARON. How much more will they clap me, when in a little time hence I shall carry this Milo himself and put him in my bark ; when he is laid low by the most invincible of all antagonists, he will come down to us, without conceiving how it

¹ Athenæus, *Deipn.* x. 2, adds, that Milo on the same day, all alone, ate up the ox. Probably he had some helpers ; though one may suppose an athlete, who used regularly every day to consume twenty pounds of meat and as many pounds of bread [*ibid.*], may have a pretty powerful digestion.

was possible that death could trip up his heels. In what a low tone will he then sob and sigh, on recollecting these crowns and these hand-clappings—he who now so haughtily stalks about, and is stared at by everybody for shouldering an ox ! What think you ; does it ever occur to the man's mind, that he shall die ?

MERCURY. How should he in the full consciousness of such strength entertain the thought of death ?

CHARON. Let him alone ! He will soon give us cause enough for laughter, when in my boat he will not be able to carry a gnat, to say nothing of an ox.—Now tell me, who is the man yonder of that majestic port ? No Greek, by his dress.

MERCURY. It is Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, who transferred the vast empire which the Medes had been so long possessed of, to the Persians, who not long since subdued the Assyrians and conquered Babylon, and now proposes to himself no less an object than to invade Lydia, that by vanquishing Cræsus, he may be master of all Asia.

CHARON. And that Cræsus, where is he ?

MERCURY. Turn your eyes this way, to yon great citadel, surrounded by a triple rampart. That is Sardis ; and you may perceive Cræsus himself sitting upon a golden throne, just now engaged in conversation with Solon of Athens. Shall we listen to what they are saying ? ¹

¹ See Herodot. lib. i. cap. 30-33, whence the here following conversation between Solon and Cræsus is taken.

CHARON. With all my heart.

CRÆSUS. Stranger of Athens, you have beheld all my riches and treasures, the prodigious quantity of uncoined gold that I possess, and all the splendour of my court : tell me now, whom do you esteem the happiest of men ?

CHARON. What do you think will be Solon's answer ?

MERCURY. Depend upon it, Charon, nothing unworthy of him.

SOLON. O Cræsus, the happy are few ; but among those whom I know, I reckon Cleobis and Bito the happiest ; the sons of the priestess.—

CHARON. Of Argos he means, the two brothers who lately died both at the same moment, after they had harnessed themselves to their mother's carriage and drawn her to the temple.

CRÆSUS. Let them then have the uppermost place among the happy. But the next after them, to whom do you assign ?

SOLON. To Tellus of Athens ; who as long as he lived was happy, and died for his country.

CRÆSUS. Then you do not account me happy ?

SOLON. That I cannot know till you shall have lived out your course. For death is the only authentic judge on that point ; and I esteem him alone happy, who is so to the final period of life.

CHARON. Excellently said, Solon, for not forgetting us ; my boat, after all, you hold the only

place where that question can be decided ! — But who are they that Cræsus is now sending off with burdens on their shoulders, and what is it they carry ?

MERCURY. Wedges of gold which he devotes to Apollo at Delphi,¹ out of gratitude for a prophecy, which will presently bring him to ruin ; for the man has a firm belief in those matters.

CHARON. That shining pale reddish substance then is what they call gold ? I am glad to have seen at last that of which I have heard so much talk.

MERCURY. Yes, dear Charon, it is that highly-prized thing which creates so much mischief in the world.

CHARON. I cannot see anything so peculiar in it, except that it weighs them down to the ground who carry it.

MERCURY. You are safely ignorant then how many wars, conspiracies, perjuries, robberies and murders are owing to it ? What long perilous journeys are undertaken on its account ; that it is the source of all commerce among mankind, and the greatest of tyrants, because all are slaves to it ?

CHARON. On account of its difference from copper, I should think it not worth the pains. For of copper I profess to understand something ; as you know I receive an obol from every person, as the fare for ferrying over.

MERCURY. Copper there is in abundance, and therefore it is of inferior value ; whereas gold is

¹ Herodot. i. cap. 50.

in smaller quantity dug up from a great depth : however, it is produced from the earth, as well as lead and other metals.

CHARON. What a silly set of beings mankind must be, to have such a monstrous passion for pale-yellow, heavy things !

MERCURY. Solon there at least appears not to be one of its admirers : you see how he laughs at Cræsus with all his gold and his Asiatic haughtiness. But hark, methinks he is going to put a question to him.

SOLON. But if I may presume to ask, Cræsus, do you believe that Apollo is in want of these wedges ?

CRÆSUS. Certainly ! For of all the offerings devoted in his temple at Delphi, there is nothing of so great value.

SOLON. You think then to make the god happy, if, in addition to all other things, he possesses wedges of gold ?

CRÆSUS. Why not ?

SOLON. Then there must be great poverty in heaven, if they are obliged to cause gold to be imported from Lydia, whenever they have occasion for it.

CRÆSUS. And where in the world is more gold to be had than with us ?

SOLON. With submission, is there iron likewise in Lydia ?

CRÆSUS. Not much.

SOLON. It is deficient then in what is preferable ?

CRÆSUS. And how should iron be preferable to gold ?

SOLON. If you will not be angry, I will tell you.

CRÆSUS. Say on.

SOLON. Who is better, he who protects others, or who is protected ?

CRÆSUS. Naturally, who protects others.

SOLON. If now Cyrus, as the report goes, should attack the Lydians, would you have golden swords made for your troops, or iron ?

CRÆSUS. Iron, to be sure.

SOLON. If therefore you have not iron enough, your gold will fall into the Persian captivity.

CRÆSUS. Heaven forbid ! Talk not to me so captiously, man !

SOLON. May indeed that event be far from happening ! You seem however tacitly to confess, that iron is better than gold ?

CRÆSUS. What ? You require me then to devote iron wedges to the god, and to fetch back the golden ?

SOLON. The god wants not your iron either ; but whether you now devote to him iron or gold, you enrich him not by it, but other people, the Phocians or the Bœotians or the Delphians themselves, or some tyrant or plunderer : Apollo certainly cares little for your goldsmiths.

CRÆSUS. My riches I see have put you in a very ill-humour.

MERCURY. You hear, Charon, the Lydian can-

not endure to be told the truth with such freedom ; a poor private man, who does not cast his eyes to the ground in his presence, but tells him frankly his opinion, is to him a strange and unaccountable phenomenon. He will however painfully recollect this Solon, when Cyrus, into whose captivity he will fall, orders him to the scaffold.¹ For it was but the other day that I heard Clotho reading from the book of fate what awaited these two kings ; where among other things it was inscribed, that Cræsus would be taken prisoner by Cyrus, and Cyrus be slain by the Massagetan dame, the Scythian woman whom you see yonder riding on the white horse.

CHARON. I see her.

MERCURY. Aye, that is Tomyris. She will cut Cyrus's head off, and throw it into a tub full of blood. — Do you see that youth there, his son ? It is Cambyses. He will succeed him in the government, and after a thousand disasters in Lybia and Ethiopia, at last die mad, because he will kill the Apis of the Egyptians.

CHARON. Oh, the ridiculous creatures ! And now who can behold without disgust with what pride and insolence they look down upon other men ? Or, who could believe, that in a little while this will be in chains, and that have his head thrown into a tub full of blood ? — But who is that, Mercury, in the purple garment with golden

¹ For this, and all the following historical facts in this dialogue, Herodotus is the voucher.

clasps, and the diadem on his head, to whom his cook is handing a ring, which he has found in a fish that he has just cut up ? There on the *sea-girt isle* ? *That man may perhaps even boast of being a king ?*¹

MERCURY. You are again bringing in your Homerican hemistiches, Charon. The man that excites your attention is the prince of Samos, Polycrates, who at this moment thinks himself the happiest of all mortals, but he will be betrayed by that very courtier whom you see standing by him, to his enemy the satrap Oroetes, and by him be nailed to the cross,—as I likewise heard from Clotho.

CHARON. Well done, Clotho ! Go on ; off with their heads, and away with them to the cross, that these haughty folks² may know that they are but men ! Raise them as high as you will, their fall is only the deeper ! How I shall laugh when I have

¹ *Odyssey*, i., ver. 50 and 180.

² Charon is accustomed to view mankind no otherwise than in the state of perfect equality in which they are huddled together by death on the banks of the Stygian lake. Hence his hatred against those who in life are so exalted above others of mankind, and in virtue of the celebrated right of the strongest, take so much upon them. A hatred that proceeds even to exultation in their distresses, which in the ferryman of the dead is indeed very natural, but however is rather cruel. For how can kings help it, that fate has made them kings, and that, just because they are but men as all others are, they can bear a superhuman dignity no better than any other man, if he were in their place ?

them once in my boat, and know them again man for man, though they will then be naked and destitute, and neither parade in purple robes and Persian tiaras, nor take with them their golden couches !

MERCURY. Such will indeed be the lot of these lords of the earth. But, good Charon, turn your eyes now to the great masses of men and their occupations. Do you see how some are sailing to and fro upon the ocean, others carrying on war, others labouring in the fields, these crowding the courts of law, those the usurers' shops ?

CHARON. What a swarm ! What restlessness and confusion throughout. Their cities appear to me like bee-hives, where each individual has his sting and endeavours to sting his neighbour ; while some, resembling the wasps, roam about, driving the weaker before them. But what are then those forms that gregariously, as in a fog, are perpetually hovering about them ?

MERCURY. These are the hopes, Charon, and the cares, and the false imaginations, the ignorance and folly, voluptuousness, avarice and envy, and the various passions that perpetually haunt them. These latter, together with folly and ignorance, live with mankind as their constant countrymen and domestic inmates ; but fear and hope, with their whole gang, flutter over them. The former, when it settles down upon them, often makes them lose their heads, as it were, from consternation and dismay, and sometimes throws them entirely to

the ground : whereas the hopes always buzz close to their heads ; but so soon as anyone eagerly catches at them, away they all go, and he grasps the air ; in some such way as you in hell see Tantalus with perpetually parched lips snapping at the water, flowing near to his mouth. Strain your eyes as much as possible, and you will see the Parcæ over them, spinning on each one's peculiar distaff the thread which is the apportioned length of his life. Does not it appear to you as if the threads of a spider's web dropped down upon the several individuals ?

CHARON. Yes ; I see everyone hanging to an infinitely slender thread ; which is generally interwoven and entangled with another.

MERCURY. You see very right, dear Ferryman. These involutions signify either, that one is decreed by fate to die by the other's hand ; or that he will succeed to the heritage of one though his thread be shorter. You see to what a feeble thread all are suspended. A man is now drawn up to a great height, and is prominent above the rest : but when the thread can no longer bear the weight, it snaps short, and the fall occasions a so much greater crash ; on the contrary another, who was raised but little above the ground, falls so gently that it can scarcely be heard by his neighbours.

CHARON. It is ridiculous stuff, Mercury !

MERCURY. In truth, it is not to be expressed by words how ridiculous it is ; especially when we

observe the astonishing exertion and solicitude wherewith they pursue the objects of their desires ; and then how suddenly comes gaunt death, and carries them off in the midst of their hopes. He however has, as you perceive, an infinite number of officers and messengers marching before him, agues, fevers, consumptions, peripneumonies, swords and daggers and poisons, judges and tyrants. On all these they bestow not a thought, while health remains ; but when once they are thrown flat upon their faces, then nothing is heard but, alas, alas, ah me, ah me, weeping and wailing ! Did they but consider at first, that they are born to die ; if they viewed themselves as travellers stopping to bait for a short time in life, and then be forced to depart as out of a dream, leaving all that they had behind them ; they would then live more rationally and die with less reluctance. But now, since in prosperity they live as though it must last for ever, they are out of temper when one of the ministers of death appears, to arrest them with a consumption or a putrid fever, and carry them off ; and complain as if some great injury had been done them in being dragged away so unexpectedly. For indeed it must mightily vex a poor fellow who has been industriously employed in building himself a commodious and substantial house, and urged the workmen to expedite the structure, on suddenly receiving intelligence that he must be off as soon as he has covered it in, and leave to his heir a mansion in which he has

not had the satisfaction of once eating a meal. In like manner another, who is now in raptures that his wife has borne him a boy, and gives his friends a great entertainment on the event, if he knew that the boy must die in his seventh year, do you think he would be so delighted on account of his birth ? But the reason is, that he is looking only to that happy father who has lived to have the satisfaction of seeing his son return as victor from the Olympic games ; whereas his neighbour, who has just borne his son to the grave, he bestows as little regard upon, as on the short thread by which the life of his own is suspended. And how many do you see who go to law about the boundaries of their estate, and how many who accumulate money upon money, and ere they have derived the least enjoyment from it, are summoned away by these harbingers of death !

CHARON. I see it all ; and am revolving in my mind what there is so agreeable in life, and what that may be that makes men so dejected at the thought of losing it. For we have only to contemplate the lot of kings, who pass for the happiest among them, in order to see that even with them the comforts of life are far overbalanced by the discomforts : for fears and disquietudes, their own caprices and passions from within ; hatred and plottings from without, and, what is still worse than all the rest, the misfortune to be perpetually flattered, are pure evils of daily occurrence, and inseparably attached to

their station. Not to speak of the inconstancy of fortune, and the other crosses and disappointments, to which as men they are obnoxious in common with all others. Now, if such be the condition even of kings, how must the matter stand with private persons?—Shall I therefore tell you, Mercury, how mankind and the whole course of their lives appear to me? You must have often remarked those bubbles that rise in the spray of a rapid torrent, and swell into a foam? Of these bubbles the generality are so small that they instantaneously burst and vanish: others remain somewhat longer, and meeting more in their passage with which they become confluent they grow to a bigger tumour, but presently break as well as the former because by the nature of them it cannot be otherwise. Exactly so does the lives of men appear to me. All are for a short time tumid with the spirit of life, some more, others less; with many this inflation is of some though very short duration, others vanish the moment they arise; but break they must all.

MERCURY. Your similitude, Charon, might be put beside Homer's, who compares the generations of men with the leaves of trees.¹

CHARON. Such being the case with them, Mercury, can anything be more absurd, than to see the poor people so vehemently contend with one another for lordships, posts of honour, and

¹ *Iliad*, iv. 146, etc.

territorial possessions; seeing they must so quickly abandon their all, and come down to us with a single obol in the mouth? Do not you think I ought, since we are on such an eminence, to bawl down to them as loud as I can, and exhort them to spare themselves these nugatory pursuits, and to live so as having death continually before their eyes? If for instance I were to say: Oh, ye fools, why should you so strenuously contend for such things! Cease from toiling and moiling! you will not live always; nothing of that you treasure up here below is everlasting; none of you can take anything with him in death; he must go hence as naked as he came hither; your houses, your estates, your gold, all these must perpetually devolve from one to the other, and continually change masters.—If I could bellow this and more of the like sort distinctly into their ears, do not you think it would be of great utility to the human race, and that they would become much more rational?

MERCURY. My good Charon, you are not aware that their ears are so stopped up with ignorance and error, that you could not open them with an auger. They have more wax in them than Ulysses stuffed into the ears of his comrades to close them against the song of the sirens. Therefore how could you hope to be heard by them, though you should bawl till you burst? For what Lethe effects with you, that ignorance does

here. In the meantime however there are some few among them, who have no wax in their ears, and, through a natural inclination to truth, have a very keen sight, and take an accurate and perspicuous view of human affairs.

CHARON. Let me at least call out to them.

MERCURY. It would be superfluous to tell them what they already know. Do not you see how they everywhere separate from the common herd, laughing at the follies of which they are constrained to be the spectators, without countenancing them in any manner or degree? nay, how they make it plainly appear that they are delighted with escaping out of life to you, and the rather, since they are universally hated as the everlasting censors of the follies of their brethren.

CHARON. Brave fellows! Pity it is that they are so few!

MERCURY. These few must suffice.—But it is now time to go down.

CHARON. Only one thing more, dear Hermes! and then your information will be complete. Let me now see the receptacles, where they deposit their corpses.

MERCURY. They call them graves, tombs, or sepulchres. You see yonder before every city the little mounds of earth thrown up, with several tombs and pyramids among them. These are destined to receive and to preserve the bodies of the dead.

CHARON. But what do the people there mean

by perfuming the tombstones and hanging wreaths of flowers upon them ? Some are setting fire to piles of wood near the hillocks, and digging pits in the earth, but why do they throw such a quantity of victuals into the fire, and why do they pour, if I see right, wine and honey into the pits ?

MERCURY. Of what service it may be to them in the subterranean world I know not : these good people however firmly believe the souls of the departed come back, and solace themselves by hovering about in the steam, and in scenting the fumes of the burnt meat, and drink the honeywine from the pit.

CHARON. Well, for my part, I have enough to do in daily transporting hither so many of the dead ; I should not have thought myself bound, as often as they are in a drinking humour, to ferry them back again ! Oh, ye silly, ignorant fellows, not to know how vast the difference is between the state of the dead and the living, and how matters are carried on among us, where all

Are dead alike, the tombless and th' entomb'd ;
Irus and Agamemnon with us stand
In equal rank, and fair-hair'd Thetis' son¹
Has o'er Thersites no pre-eminence.
All empty are the skulls, and dry the bones
That wander o'er the meads of asphodel.²

MERCURY. By Hercules, you will drain all Homer out ! But apropos of Achilles ; I must

¹ Parody on Book ix., ver. 319, 320, of the *Iliad*.

² *Odyssey*, x. ver. 421 and xi. 338.

however shew you his tomb. Do you see that point of land projecting into the sea? That is the Trojan Sigæum where his tomb stands; and over against it in Rhœteum lies Ajax.

CHARON. For such great heroes these tombs are not remarkably grand, Mercury! But shew me the great cities of which I have heard so much talk with us, the Nineveh of Sardanapalus, Babylon, Mycenæ, Cleonæ, and particularly Troy itself, from whence I had once so many dead to carry over, that in ten whole years I could neither drag my boat ashore nor refit it.

MERCURY. Nineveh, my good Ferryman, is so completely destroyed, that it is not even possible to say where it stood. That great city yonder, with the numerous towers and lofty ramparts, is Babylon, the site whereof will soon be not more easily discoverable than that Nineveh. Mycenæ and Cleonæ I am ashamed to shew you; for I am certain, when you return, you will throttle Homer, for having made so much ado about such trifling things. They were once, it is true, in a flourishing state, but now they are departed; for cities also, dear Charon, die like individuals, and what is more surprising even rivers; accordingly, of the famous Inachus at Argos not even the bed is any longer to be found.

CHARON. Oh, away with your fine epithets, Homer! the sacred Ilion, the broad-streeted Mycenæ, and the elegantly built Cleonæ!—But, not to interrupt you, who are those warriors who

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are knocking one another on the head, and what is it for ?

MERCURY. Those you see are the Argives and Lacedæmonians, and the commander of the latter, Othryades, who, already half dead, writes with his own blood the inscription beneath the trophy he raised for his countrymen.¹

CHARON. What was the origin of the war ?

MERCURY. It arose about the field they fought upon.

CHARON. What fools ! They knew not then, if each of them possessed a whole Peloponnesus, Æacus will allot him scarcely a square foot of space, whereas this field shall be tilled by successive generations, and more than once this trophy will be turned up by the plough.

MERCURY. It must indeed be so. Let us however now get down, and after having replaced

¹ Herodotus, who describes with some detail this battle of the Argives and Lacedæmonians, knew nothing of this circumstance, otherwise he would hardly have omitted it ; it is however noticed by several ancient writers. Both parties had agreed to decide the quarrel by a combat between three hundred against three hundred. These six hundred combatants fought with such fury, that of the Argives only two, of the Lacedæmonians the general Othryades alone remained alive. While now the former two were making the best of their way to Argos, to announce to their countrymen the victory they had obtained, Othryades (whom they had left half dead on the field of battle) raked together as many weapons as he could, of which he raised a trophy, and wrote under it with his own blood : The triumphal trophy of the Lacedæmonians.

the mountains where we found them, go about our business ; I to deliver my embassy, and you to your bark : for it will not be long before I bring you again a tolerably handsome number of dead.

CHARON. You have conferred on me a great favour, Mercury ; and I shall set you down as my benefactor in my memorandum-book. For I am beholden to you both for this tour and the utility arising from it.—On what insipid trifles do these unhappy earthfolks waste their particle of life—and not a thought about Charon ! ¹

¹ Both Tooke and Fowler (1905) omit the words “ kings, golden ingots, obsequies and battles,” in parenthesis, as being spurious, but it is restored in the latest (Loeb) text.

DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD



I

ADIOGENES AND POLLUX

DIOGENES. My dear Pollux, when you reascend to the upper world,—and to-morrow, I think, it is your turn to be alive again¹—I have a commission for you to Menippus the dog, whom you will find either in the Craneon

¹ See Dialogues of the Gods, xxvi.

DIALOGUES OF THE DEAD. It is pretty probable, that Homer's *Nekyomantia*, or the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*,

at Corinth or in the Lyceon at Athens, where he is diverting himself with the wranglings of the philosophers. Tell him : Diogenes orders him, if he has laughed his fill at the follies that pass upon earth, to come down here, where he will find much more to laugh at. For there he is frequently undetermined whether to laugh or cry, and the thought sometimes occurs to him, who knows how it will fare with us after this life ? But here he may laugh with thorough knowledge of the fact, and not give over laughing (as is at present the case with me), particularly when he shall see, what a wretched figure the rich, the satraps and kings make here, how we can only distinguish them by their howling, and how melancholy and dejected they are when they recollect their state there above. Tell him that, Pollux ; and bid him not forget to fill his pouch with lupines, and if in his way down he shall find

by furnishing various materials for these Dialogues, suggested to our author the first idea of this novel dress, at least to the Greeks, for his satirical manner of philosophising. Even the notions he has adopted of the dead and their condition in Hades are entirely Homeric. Nothing can be more woeful than the delineation drawn by Homer of the state of the defunct. It is a strange intermediate situation between existence and non-existence, of which it is difficult, even with the aid of the homeric pencil, to form a tolerable conception ; of which however Lucian has had the art to avail himself to admiration, in ridiculing with his peculiar humour the vulgar tenets respecting the state of souls after death, hell-torments, the deification of dead persons, etc.

a Hecate's-supper,¹ or a lustration-egg, let him pick it up.

POLLUX. I will not fail, Diogenes. But by what shall I know him ; what sort of appearance has he ?

DIOGENES. Old, bald-headed, wears a thread-bare cloak, with abundance of apertures in it, pervious to every wind, and patched with rags of all possible colours ; he laughs incessantly, and those conceited pedants the philosophers are generally the objects of his derision.

POLLUX. By this description I shall easily find him.

DIOGENES. May I dare to trouble you with another little commission to those philosophers themselves ?

POLLUX. Only speak ; I shall think it no trouble at all.

DIOGENES. To comprise it all in few words : recommend it to them, in the strongest terms possible, to cease once for all wasting their time in insignificant trifles, in quarrelling about universalia, planting horns upon one another, making crocodiles,² and teaching young men to set a value upon such dry and barren sophistries.

POLLUX. But they will say, I am an illiterate

¹ For the latest and best note on Hecate's suppers, see Hastings's *Ency. Rel. Eth.*, Vol. vi., pp. 565-67.

² The crocodile was a famous sophistical problem with which the dialecticians used to tease one another. If the reader is so inclined he may try his ingenuity upon it. Here it is in the form of a tale. A mother earnestly besought a crocodile that was running away with her child in its jaws,

blockhead ; that I take upon me to tutor them in wisdom.

DIOGENES. Then tell them in my name, that they will repent it.

POLLUX. I will faithfully execute everything, Diogenes.

DIOGENES. To the rich, dear Pollux, I would commission you to deliver a word or two. Say to them in my name : you fools, why do you hoard up your gold, why do you plague yourselves in calculating your interest, and to what end do you accumulate thousands upon thousands, since you must shortly travel to the kingdom of the dead, with a single obol in your mouth ?

that he would be so good as to restore her boy. "That I will do," answered the crocodile, "if you tell the truth to the question I shall propose to you." The mother agreed to the terms. "Tell me then," said the crocodile, "shall I restore your boy or not ?"—The question now is, what should the mother reply ? Whether she answer yes or no, she does not recover her child. If she say : "You will not give it me," then he gives it her ; and as she consequently has not spoke true, the wager is lost, and she must return the child to the crocodile. If she says : "You will restore it to me : " he answers, " You lie ! I will not restore it to you," and devours the youth, and the mother cannot accuse him of any breach of the contract ; for she has not spoke true. The grammarian Aphthonius advises the mother to make the former reply, and (as the crocodile, to convict her of the untruth, must render it up) to run away with the child. If she can run faster than the crocodile, the counsel of Aphthonius is undoubtedly the best for the rescue of the boy ; but the sophism still remains unsolved.

POLLUX. Good ! it shall all be told to them.

DIOGENES. And to the beautiful and strong, to Megillus of Corinth and to the wrestler Damoxenus say : with us there are neither yellow hair, nor black sparkling eyes, nor rosy coloured cheeks, nor plump sinews, nor broad shoulders ; nothing but bare skulls that have no reproaches to make one another on account of beauty.

POLLUX. This commission too will be no trouble to me.

DIOGENES. And to the poor, of whom so many are in absolute want and ever lamenting their indigence, say : you had better put an end to your wimpering and whining, for tell them that all here is upon a foot of equality, and they will see, that the rich have no privileges here. And, if you will, you may scold your Lacedæmonians in my name, for this, that they are no longer what they formerly were.

POLLUX. Nothing against the Lacedæmonians, Diogenes ! That I cannot bear. What you have commissioned me to say to the others, shall be duly delivered.

II

MENIPPUS CRÆSUS, MIDAS *and* SARDANAPALUS,
 his accusers PLUTO

CRÆSUS. Pluto, it is not possible to endure this dog of a fellow, this Menippus, any longer in our

company. Therefore, either turn him out, or we shall be forced to shift our quarters.

PLUTO. What harm can he do you, since he is dead as you are ?

CRÆSUS. When we kings are sitting together, and talking over the reminiscences of affairs above ; Midas of his gold, Sardanapalus of his luxuries, and I of my treasures, and we seek to alleviate our regrets by groans and lamentations : then comes this fellow, laughing at our misery, and abusing us as slaves and villains ; sometimes he even drowns our howlings with singing—in one word, he is insupportably troublesome.

PLUTO. What is this I hear, Menippus ?

MENIPPUS. The plain truth, Pluto ; I hate such mean miserable wretches, who, not content with having lived ill, are desirous to act as badly after death ; and therefore are perpetually thinking on what they were above. For that reason I take delight in teasing them.

PLUTO. That however you ought not to do. The poor people have every reason to be sorry ; what they were forced to leave behind them are no trifles.

MENIPPUS. How, Pluto, are you doting ; that you can approve of such idle repinings ?

PLUTO. That I do not ; but I will have no disturbance among you.

MENIPPUS. Hear me then, ye most beggarly of all the Lydians, Phrygians and Assyrians, and let me tell you, that I will never leave you ; go

where you will, I will follow you, to torment you, to sing in your ears, and laugh at you.

CRÆSUS. Is not this intolerable insolence ?

MENIPPUS. No ! But it was intolerable insolence when you caused yourselves to be worshipped on the knees, and disdainfully accosted freeborn men, and thought as little on death as if you were to go on in that manner for ever. Now, that you are deprived of all that, you howl——

CRÆSUS. Gods ! What numerous and extensive possessions !

MIDAS. What mountains of gold !

SARDANAPALUS. What exquisite delights !

MENIPPUS. Bravo ! Now howl away ! I shall join in the chorus, and will never cease singing in your ears the old burden “ Know thyself ” ; it will have an excellent effect when accompanied with your never-ending ohs ! and ahs !

III

MENIPPUS AMPHILOCHUS TROPHONIUS

MENIPPUS. I would fain know, Amphilochus and Trophonius, how you two, being dead like others, come to have temples in honour of you, in the upper world, and to pass for prophets, and how the silly people can imagine you are gods ?

TROPHONIUS. How can we help it, if the fools ignorantly entertain such an opinion ?

MENIPPUS. They however would entertain no

such opinion, if you had not played such tricks in your life-time, and given yourselves out for people who could foresee the future, and foretell it those who consulted you.

TROPHONIUS. Amphilocheus for his part will without doubt be able to answer. I, my good Menippus, am a hero, and prophesy to those who come down into my cave. One would suppose you had never been at Lebadeia; otherwise you would not be so incredulous.

MENIPPUS. What do you say? Unless then I go to Lebadeia, ridiculously dressed out in a linen gown, and with honey-cakes in both hands, creep down through a narrow orifice into the cave there, I cannot know that you, who stand there before me, are as dead as the rest of us, and that you excel others in nothing but impostures!—But by all the powers of prophecy, tell me what sort of a thing is a hero. For till this moment I have never been able to find it out.

TROPHONIUS. Compounded of a man and of a god.

MENIPPUS. Ha! I understand! It is not a man, nor is it a god, but it is both together. Whither is at present your divine moiety gone?

TROPHONIUS. It is dispensing oracles in Bœotia.¹

MENIPPUS. I do not perfectly understand what you mean: but that you are over and over dead, that I see very plain.

¹ For a note on the cave of Trophonius, see Frazer, *Pausanias*, Vol. v., pp. 201-4.

IV

MERCURY AND CHARON

MERCURY. If you please, ferryman, we will reckon up how much you are in my debt, that we may have no occasion to dispute about it hereafter.

CHARON. I have no objection; it is better to come to a settlement, we shall have one care the less.

MERCURY. For an anchor, which you ordered me to get, five drachmæ.

CHARON. That is a great deal of money.

MERCURY. By Pluto, I laid out five good drachmæ for it. And for a leathern thong to secure the oar, I paid a couple of obols.

CHARON. Well; put down five drachmæ and two obols.

MERCURY. For a needle to mend the sail, which cost me five obols.

CHARON. Put that down to it.

MERCURY. For pitch to stop the chinks in the boat. Item: for nails, and for a rope that you used for tying the sail-yard to the mast. Total two drachmæ.

CHARON. Very well: them you bought cheap enough.

MERCURY. I cannot now think of anything more; though I may have forgot something or other. And now when do you promise to pay me?

CHARON. At present, dear Mercury, it is impossible to say : but as soon as ever a pestilence or a war shall bring better times, and send me dead by shoals, you may depend upon having your money. Besides, in that case I may now and then have an opportunity, in a crowd, by a small mistake in reckoning up the toll, to lay something by.

MERCURY. Then I have nothing to do, but to sit down and wish for the most dreadful calamities to fall on poor mortals.

CHARON. There is no other way for you to expect to be paid, Mercury. In times of peace, as you see, so few come to me, that very little is to be got.

MERCURY. It is however better as it is ; though I must give you the longer credit for it. You have not forgot the good old times, Charon, and it must be confessed they are now much altered, if we compare the present arrivals from the upper world with the former ones. Formerly they were all stately, good-looking men, generally covered with blood and wounds : at present they are mostly pale, haggard or emaciated and languid spectres, who have either been poisoned by their own children or wives, or by their excesses and luxurious mode of life are summoned hither before their time ; and it is observable in the generality of those who come to us, that they have dispatched one another for the sake of their money.

CHARON. Money is at present so precious a commodity, that there is but too good reason for it.

MERCURY. You will not therefore take it amiss, if I am a little more urgent, on this occasion, for the payment of what is due to me.

V

PLUTO AND MERCURY

PLUTO. Mercury, are you acquainted with a certain excessively old and excessively rich Eucrates, who has no children, but in lieu of them, fifty thousand good friends in full chase after his estate.

MERCURY. I know him very well; you mean the wealthy Sicyonian? And what of him?

PLUTO. I wish, Mercury, that to the ninety years he has already lived, you would if possible deal him out ninety more and upwards. But as to those parasites, young Charinus, Damon, and the rest, dispatch them quickly to us one after another.

MERCURY. That would carry a preposterous look with it.

PLUTO. Not at all. Every man would approve it, and think it right. For what reason have these fellows to wish for his death, and lie in wait for his substance, being in no wise related to him? The most preposterous of it is, that with such

sentiments they profess to the world that they are the most zealously attached to him, and when he is sick put up great vows for his recovery, though everybody knows what they wish. In short, they are an infamous pack of hypocritical scoundrels, whose artifices ought not to succeed. Let him therefore be immortal ! And as for them, let them have stretched their gaping beaks in vain, by being forced to march off before him.

MERCURY. What faces the scoundrels will make, when they see themselves led away ! But Eucrates plays his part very well, he knows how to cajole them and lead them about by the nose. The old fox makes as if death was sitting on his lips, though in fact he is in better health than the young men that are already sharing his inheritance among them, and anticipating the happy life they shall lead after a little while.

PLUTO. Let Eucrates therefore cast his old skin, and like Ioleus,¹ begin again to live, and let them receive their due reward by being snatched away while indulging delicious dreams of riches and pleasure !

¹ This Ioleos in the heroic history of the age preceding the Trojan war, played no inferior part. He was the nephew of Hercules, accompanied him on most of his adventures, and when he burnt himself on mount Oeta, was the first who sacrificed to him as a hero or demi-god. When Ioleos was become impotent through age, the deified Hercules induced his consort Hebe (the goddess of youth) to make him young again. Ovid, *Metam.* ix. fab. 9.

MERCURY. Put yourself to no trouble about it, Pluto ; I will take care to conduct them hither in proper order. I think they are seven in all.

PLUTO. Do so. The old man shall see them all despatched before him ; and from a superannuated greybeard let him be again a youth !

VI

TERPSION AND PLUTO

TERPSION. Is this fair and equitable, Pluto, that I should die in my thirtieth year, and old Thucritus at ninety still continue to live ?

PLUTO. Very fair and equitable, my good Terpsion, that a man should live, who never wishes for the death of a friend, whereas you die because you were perpetually plotting against his life, and from eagerness after his estate had hardly patience to wait for his death.

TERPSION. How ? Ought not an old man, who can no longer enjoy his wealth, to retire and make room for the young ?

PLUTO. This is quite a new law that you would establish, Terpsion, that all those who could no longer enjoy their riches with pleasure, should be condemned to death : both fate and nature have determined otherwise.

TERPSION. Then I maintain that they have determined unjustly. It should have been settled in the constitution of things, that we should go out of

the world according to seniority ; the oldest first, then the next after him, and so on ; not the reverse, that a decrepit greybeard, who has scarcely three teeth left in his head, is deprived of almost all his senses, and can hardly move himself from one chair to another, without the assistance of four servants ; in short, who is a laughing-stock to children, and may properly be called a living sepulchre ; that such a one should continue to live ; whilst contrariwise the young, the beautiful, and the brave, the most vigorous young men must die ; which is no less preposterous and absurd, than if streams were to run backward to their sources. At least one ought to know the time when old fellows are to die, that we might regulate ourselves accordingly, and not pay our court to them for nothing. Whereas, as it is at present, the old proverb is often brought to pass, the cart draws the oxen.

PLUTO. All this, my good Terpsion, fate has more wisely constituted than you imagine. And after all, who bids you so greedily gape after other peoples' estates, and cringe to childless greypates, in hopes of being their heir ? You deserve to be laughed at when they bury *you* ; and whenever that happens it causes general satisfaction ; the more impatiently you have longed for their death, the more delightful it is to all men when you die before them. Verily you have invented a new art, to fall in love with old women and old men—who have no children, is understood ; for that circum-

stance is a necessary requisite for rendering them amiable to you. Some of them therefore, aware of the cozening quality of your love, are cunning enough to repay artifice by artifice, and in order to obtain admirers likewise pretend as if they could not endure their children. But, when the last will and testament comes to be made, the self-interested eye-servants are excluded, nature as she ought prevails, and the former gnash their teeth, and their disappointed hopes excite the general laughter.

TERPSION. What you say is but too true. What a deal of money have I lost by that old Thucritus, while he always seemed to be near his end, and whenever I entered his chamber, used to fetch a deep sigh, and begin to squeak from his inside, like a chick creeping out of the egg shell ! In the full persuasion therefore, that he had already one foot in the grave, I fancied I could never send him presents enough, fearing lest my rivals should surpass me in their liberal assiduity. The anxious solicitude in calculating and arranging my projects cost me many a sleepless night ; aye, I am certain that my uneasiness and want of sleep together were the cause of my death : and the old sinner, who gulped down such a number of baits at my expense, stood by yesterday when I was buried, and laughed in his sleeve !

PLUTO. Bravo, old Thucritus, live as long as is in the power of man, and be rich, and laugh at the worthies who so earnestly long to be your heirs !

May you not die till you have despatched all your adorers before you !

TERPSION. Nothing could give me greater pleasure, than if Charides were to die before the old man.

PLUTO. Depend upon it, Terpsion ! Pheido and Melanthus too, and all the rest of them shall precede him, and be brought hither by the same solitudes and cares that expedited you.

TERPSION. I am glad of that. Long live Thucritus !

VII

ZENOPHANTES AND CALLIDEMIDAS

ZENOPHANTES. Oh ! How happens it that we meet together here, Callidemidas ? What occasioned you to be so prematurely carried off ? For that I was suffocated by an indigestion, which I got by over-eating myself at the table of Deinias, whose company I kept, is well known to you, as you were present at my death.

CALLIDEMIDAS. Mine was owing to an accident, which it was less in my power to foresee. You know old Ptœodorus ?

ZENOPHANT. The rich old man, who has no child ; whose house you always frequented ?

CALLIDEM. I sedulously attended upon him for a long time ; because he gave me hopes of a speedy departure, and leaving me his heir. The affair however training on beyond all patience,

as the old fellow seemed determined to outlive Tithon himself, I discovered a short way to his inheritance. I bought some poison and bribed his butler, on the first opportunity when Ptæodorus (who is a pretty hard drinker) should call for a full flowing cup, secretly to infuse the poison with the wine.

ZENOPHANT. And how did it turn out? You seem to have something at your tongue's end.

CALLIDEM. One day, coming together from the bath into the eating-room, where the butler had two full cups ready, one with poison for Ptæodorus, and one without poison for me. How it happened I know not, but by some mistake he handed to me the poisoned cup; so that the old man voided his without receiving injury, and I immediately fell upon the floor, and was sent instead of him to the kingdom of the dead. But what is it then, Zenophantes, that makes you laugh so heartily? It is not civil to laugh at a friend in such circumstances.

ZENOPHANT. I laugh because I cannot help it, Callidemidas; the accident is too diverting. But what said the old man to it?

CALLIDEM. At first he was shocked indeed at the suddenness of the catastrophe; but on discovering I suppose how the affair happened, he laughed at the mistake of his butler at least as heartily as you do.

ZENOPHANT. Endeavouring to go the shortest

way, good friend, you lost yourself. Whereas had you gone leisurely along the beaten road, it would have brought you safer to the inheritance, though perhaps a little later.

VIII

CNEMON AND DAMNIPPUS

CNEMON. [*To himself.*] Desperation ! This bears out the old adage : “the fawn catches the lion.”

DAMNIPPUS. What puts you so out of humour, Cnemon ?

CNEMON. Why am I out of humour, do you ask ? Because I have been such a blockhead as to suffer myself to be over-reached, by leaving a man against my will heir to my estate, to the detriment of those of my family whom I wished most it should descend to.

DAMNIPPUS. How did you contrive that ?

CNEMON. I paid my court to Hermolaus, who rolls in riches and has no children, in hopes of becoming his heir, and he seemed to accept my assiduities with pleasure. Now I thought it would be a very artful device, if I published a testament, wherein I should constitute him the sole heir to all my property : for I doubted not, that he had so much honour in him, as to make the like disposition in my favour.

DAMNIPPUS. And he ?

CNEMON. What was in his testament I know not ; for I was sent headlong out of the world, by the falling in of a roof upon me. And now Hermolaus is in possession of all that I was worth, like a greedy pike as he is, having swallowed the bait with the hook and all.

DAMNIPPUS. And yourself, the angler, into the bargain. You are therefore caught in the trap which you set yourself.

CNEMON. That is exactly what makes me so miserable.

IX

SIMYLUS AND POLYSTRATUS

SIMYLUS. So, Polystratus, you are come down to us at last ! If I am not mistaken you must have lived to pretty near a hundred.

POLYSTRATUS. Eight and ninety, dear Simylus.

SIMYLUS. How have you spent the thirty years that you have survived me ? For I died when you were about seventy.

POLYSTR. Most pleasantly, extraordinary as it may appear to you.

SIMYLUS. Extraordinary enough, that one so old, infirm, and moreover without children, should have found enjoyment in life.

POLYSTR. In the first place, I could do as I pleased ; then I had everything that could flatter the senses, a numerous retinue of the most beautiful of both sexes, the most precious ointments,

the most racy wines, a more than Sicilian table,¹ and other things in proportion.

SIMYLUS. This is quite incomprehensible to me.—When I knew you, you were a very frugal man.

POLYSTR. All these felicities, you must know, my worthy sir, flowed in upon me gratuitously from others. By break of day my court-yard was crowded with a multitude of visitors, and on their admittance I received from them presents of all sorts, the finest and choicest productions of all parts of the earth.

SIMYLUS. Since my time, then Polystratus, I suppose you became a potentate ?

POLYSTR. Not so ; but I had ten thousand admirers.

SIMYLUS. You, at such an advanced age, with four teeth in your mouth, admirers !

POLYSTR. By Jupiter ! and the first persons in the city. My age, my bald head, my blear eyes, and my perpetual snuffling prevented them not from taking infinite pleasure in attendance upon me, and happy was he on whom I deigned to cast an amiable look.

SIMYLUS. Now verily you must, like Phaon,²

¹ Sicilian tables and Sicilian luxury, πολυτέλεια, were, since Plato, Aristippus, Æschines, and other Socratic philosophers had made acquaintance with the table of Dionysius of Syracuse, become proverbial with the Greeks.

² The darling of the poetess Sappho, of whom this story was related.

have brought the goddess of love across the straits, and in recompense, like him, received from her the gift of becoming again young and beautiful and amiable.

POLYSTR. Not so neither: even as I was I attracted all hearts.

SIMYLUS. You speak riddles.

POLYSTR. And yet nothing is more common than this kind of love to rich heirless dotards.

SIMYLUS. Ah, now, my admirable friend, I begin to comprehend where your beauty lay. One may truly say, that it came from the golden Venus.

POLYSTR. I assure you, friend, I had no small enjoyment from my admirers; they wanted but little to adore me. I sometimes behaved mightily prudish, and to several of them I even shut the door in their faces, while the honest souls were going to loggerheads on my account in the ardour of their emulation to outdo one another in attention and assiduities.

SIMYLUS. And how at last did you dispose of your effects?

POLYSTR. I openly let out just so much, as to induce each of them to believe that I should appoint him my heir; and by that stratagem I obtained from them whatever I chose: but my real testament was locked up in my bureau, in which I had sent them away with long chins.

SIMYLUS. Who was then the happy man? Some relation of the family I suppose?

POLYSTR. No, by Jupiter ! but one of my slaves, a Phrygian youth I had recently purchased.

SIMYLUS. How old, if I may ask ?

POLYSTR. About twenty.

SIMYLUS. I understand—on account of his merits.

POLYSTR. And yet, notwithstanding he was a foreigner and a good-for-nothing fellow, he was more deserving to be my heir than they. And I can tell you, that since he is in possession of all my property, the principal personages of the city pay their court to him ; and, in spite of his smooth-shaved chin, and his barbarous accent, he is valued as much as if he had sprung from the most renowned family of the first city in Greece, and was nobler than Codrus, handsomer than Nereus, and wiser than Ulysses.

SIMYLUS. Aye, for anything I care, let him be governor-general of Greece, so the others get nothing of your inheritance !

X

CHARON, MERCURY, *and several of the Dead,*
as, MENIPPUS, CHARMOLEAS, LAMPICHUS,
DAMASIAS, CRATO, *a Soldier, a Philosopher,*
and a Rhetor

CHARON. Silence ; and hear how the matter stands ! The boat as you see is small and in a crazy condition, and leaky in several places ;



CHARMOLEAS OF MEGARA

if it is not equally trimmed, but inclines too much on either side, we overset and go to the bottom. And yet so many of you will press in, and every one of you bringing so much luggage, that I am much afraid if you persist in taking it all with you, you will have reason to repent it, especially such as cannot swim.

THE DEAD. What must we do to get safe over ?

CHARON. I will tell you. You must leave all these superfluities behind on the shore, and get in naked. Even then I think my bark will hardly contain you all. You, Mercury, take care to let none pass, who, as I direct, has not laid down his baggage. Stand therefore at the ladder, muster them one by one, and oblige them all to go on board naked.

MERCURY. I will not fail. Who is this that comes first ?

MENIPPUS. I am Menippus. There you see, Mercury, I have tossed my wallet and my staff into the lake. Luckily the cloak I did not bring with me.

MERCURY. Get in, Menippus, noblest of mortals ; take the first and highest place in the boat near the steersman, that you may have an eye over the rest.—But who does that smock-face belong to there ? Who are you ?

CHARMOLEAS. Charmoleas of Megara, so much admired by the ladies, that a single kiss cost one of them two talents.

MERCURY. So ? Lay aside then your beauty,

and your lips with all their kisses, and your fine long hair and the roses of your cheeks, and your delicate smooth skin along with them.—So ; that will do. Now you are light enough for the voyage ; step in.—And you, with the purple robe and the diadem and the stern countenance, who are you by these tokens ?

LAMPICHUS. Lampichus, tyrant of Gela.

MERCURY. Why do you come so heavily loaded, Lampichus ?

LAMPICHUS. Consider, Mercury, a prince should not come dressed like a beggar.

MERCURY. Not a prince, but a dead man. Come, strip.

LAMPICHUS. Here are my valuables, and my purse.

MERCURY. Now off with your pride, ostentation and arrogance also ; for if they enter with you they will overcharge the boat.

LAMPICHUS. At least leave me my diadem and my robe.

MERCURY. That will not do. They must go likewise.

LAMPICHUS. Then be it so !—Now, what more ? You see I have laid everything aside.

MERCURY. Likewise your cruelty, your ignorance, your violence, your furious passions, and the other vices with which you are burdened ; they must all go.

LAMPICHUS. Now I am as naked as you can require.

MERCURY. Get in!—And you, thick lump of flesh, who are you?

DAMASIAS. Damasias, the athlete.

MERCURY. Ah, now I recollect to have seen you often in the Palæstra.

DAMASIAS. I hope, Mercury, you will make no scruple to admit me, as I am naked.

MERCURY. Do you call that being naked, when you are packed up in such a quantity of flesh and fat, that if you put but one foot in the boat, you sink it? Away with it, and all the victorious wreaths and attestations and certificates that you carry about you.

DAMASIAS. Now you see I am in good earnest undressed, and not a hair heavier than the other dead.

MERCURY. The lighter the better. You may get on board.—You, my good Crato, lay aside your riches, your effeminacy and your luxury. Fling away your costly palls, and the pedigree and the escutcheons of your ancestors. Not a word of your nobility, and the pompous titles openly conferred upon you by the republic, and the inscriptions on your statues and the lofty monument that is to be erected over you! The recollection of these things only increases your heaviness.

CRATO. Well, they shall all go, though sore against my will. What can I do?

MERCURY. Heyday! what is there, an iron man in complete armour? Why do you trail that trophy along with you?

SOLDIER. Because I held out valiantly in the battle and came off victorious, and have received public testimonies of honour from the State.

MERCURY. Leave your trophies of victory upon the earth ! In Orcus is continual peace ; arms are entirely useless there.—But this venerable personage in grave attire, who walks with so consequential an air and raises his eyebrows so high, he there with the long beard, who is he ?

MENIPPUS. He is a philosopher, Mercury ; or, to speak more correctly, a mountebank and jackanapes. If you uncase him you will perhaps find some curious articles beneath his wide cloak.

MERCURY. Order him to undress.—Heavens ! What a bundle of remnants of ignorance, of disputaciousness, of whimsies, of subtle conundrums, thorny quibbles and intricate speculations ! How much labour in vain ! How many idle conceits, what a parcel of fiddle-faddle and micrology !—Ey ! There gold tumbles out, and voluptuousness and luxury and gluttony, and a whole heap of other trash.—I see all, whatever pains you take to conceal it. Disburden yourself likewise of your vainglory, and the opinion as though you were better than others. If you were to carry with you all this trumpery, it would require a fifty-oared galley for your transport.

PHILOSOPHER. It is all laid aside, since you will have it so.

MENIPPUS. Let him likewise have his beard taken off, Mercury! It is so thick and shaggy that it must weigh at the least five pounds.

MERCURY. Well thought of! It must off likewise.

PHILOSOPHER. Have you a barber with you?

MERCURY. Menippus shall take Charon's cleaver, and for want of a chopping-block, chop it off here against the ship's ladder.

MENIPPUS. There needs not so much ado; reach me the saw there—that will be more diverting.

MERCURY. The saw does it.

MENIPPUS. Excellent! There, now you look like a man, now you are free from that goatish mass of uncleanness.—Shall I proceed to diminish his eye-brows a little?

MERCURY. By all means! for he stretches them fancifully over his forehead, for what reason I cannot tell.—Now you may get in.—How? What is all this? You seem to cry at the thoughts of drowning, and are afraid of crossing the water. Get in, get in I say.

MENIPPUS. Hold! he has still the heaviest article under his arm.

MERCURY. What is it?

MENIPPUS. Adulation, which he found very lucrative in his life-time.

PHILOSOPHER. And you, Menippus, what if you were to put away your insolence, your flippancy, your carelessness, your jibes and sneers, and that

everlasting grin ? for you are the only laughter amongst us.

MERCURY. On no account whatever. They are light commodities, and easily portable, and may be very serviceable to us on the passage.—You, Mr Speechmaker, cast away your monstrous exuberance of useless words, your antitheses, your yardlong periods, your barbarisms and all that weighty verbosity, that renders your harangues so fatiguing.

RHETOR. I obey.

MERCURY. Thus then all is in order. Now loose the boat from her moorings. Haul up the ladder. Weigh the anchor. Stretch the sail. Stand to the helm, ferryman, and a prosperous voyage !—Now, what do you howl for, you num-skulls ? And you particularly, Mr Philosophus, do you cry because we have trimmed your beard ?

PHILOSOPHER. I weep because I believed the soul immortal.

MENIPPUS. He lies ! Believe me, he grieves for very different reasons.

MERCURY. And what may they be ?

MENIPPUS. That he can no longer carouse at the tables of the opulent, and steal out of nights muffled up in his mantle to take his rounds of all the secret haunts of gallantry, and then the following morning preach virtue to his audience, for pay,—this it is that grieves him !

PHILOSOPHER. You, Menippus, are not sorry that you are dead.

MENIPPUS. How should I; seeing I met death unsummoned? ¹ But while we are chattering here, do not I hear a noise of several loud voices from the earth?

MERCURY. Yes, Menippus, and from more than one quarter. For at Gela the people are all flocking together in the market to testify their joy at the death of the tyrant Lampichus; his wife is surrounded and pursued by the women, and even his little children are greeted by other children, wherever they appear, with a shower of pebbles. At Sicyon they are loudly clapping the orator Diophantus while holding the funeral oration of this Crato here, and amidst vehement bursts of lamentation, the mother of Damasius leads the choir of the women-mourners at his obsequies. Only for you, Menippus, nobody laments; you lie solitary and quiet on the earth beneath the open sky.

MENIPPUS. Not so solitary as you may suppose, Mercury: it will not long be so, you will presently hear the assembled dogs most piteously yelling, and the crows flapping their wings, when they come to bury me.

MERCURY. You are a brave fellow, Menippus!—

¹ Diogenes Laertius says (lib. vi. 99) that Menippus hanged himself, not altogether voluntarily, but from vexation at having been cheated out of his estate, and reduced to extreme indigence. Lucian appears to have had other accounts of the matter, and in general a better opinion of Menippus than that injudicious critic and tasteless compiler.

Our passage is now over. Get you all ashore, and go straight forward to the court of judicature! I, and you, ferryman, go back again to fetch others.

MENIPPUS. Happy voyage, Mercury! [*To the dead.*] We march forwards.—Well; what do you wait for? Arraigned we must all be; no remonstrances will avail; and the punishments are said to be very severe: they talk of wheels, vultures and huge stones—it will now appear how everyone has lived!

XI

CRATES AND DIOGENES

CRATES. Were you acquainted, Diogenes, with the rich Moerichus, that immensely rich Corinthian, who had always such a number of ships at sea, and whose cousin Aristetas, also a very wealthy man, who used continually to have in his mouth the scrap from Homer:

either despatch thou me
or I'll despatch thee?

DIOGENES. Why do you ask, Crates?

CRATES. I will tell you presently. They were both of equal age, and each would fain be the heir of the other; so they mutually paid such court to one another, that it was a pleasure to behold them, and published testaments wherein

Moerichus left Aristeas, and Aristeas contrariwise Moerichus, in case the one should survive the other, master of his whole property. The astrologers, dream-expounders and Chaldean scholars, even the Pythian Apollo himself mingled in the game, and gave the victory now to Aristeas, now to Moerichus, so that the balance was alternately vacillating from one to the other.

DIOGENES. And what came of it at last ?

CRATES. Both died on one and the same day, and their estates devolved to a couple of relations, who dreamt of nothing less than such an event. For the two testators, on their passage from Sicyon to Cirrha fell in with a side-wind from the northwest, which occasioned the ship to strike the ground, so that she presently foundered, and with the whole of the equipage went to the bottom.

DIOGENES. Well done, northwest wind ! We two, when we were alive, never hatched such plots against one another ; and so little did I wish for Antisthenes's death that I might inherit his staff, though it was a stout cudgel of wild olive tree, as little, I imagine, as the time was tedious to you till my death put you in possession of my estate, namely, my tub and my wallet, wherein there might be at least half a peck of lupines.

CRATES. That might well be, because we had no need of such things. Besides, we inherited all we wanted, you from Antisthenes, I from

Diogenes, what was of infinitely more value than the whole Persian empire.

UDIOGENES. And that was ?

CRATES. Wisdom, contentment, sincerity and liberty of the mind and the tongue.

UDIOGENES. By Jupiter, I remember to have received that treasure from Antisthenes, and to have bequeathed it to you amply augmented.

CRATES. Others, however, set little value upon these endowments, and nobody plied us with assiduities and obsequious attentions, in the view of inheriting them from us : they only considered where the most gold was.

UDIOGENES. Naturally ! For where should they have put what they received from us ? Their luxurious minds are as incontinent as an old rotten purse. If you should pour into them wisdom or candour, or veracity, all would immediately run through and be spilt, because they have no bottom capable of retaining it : as is the case with the poor daughters of Danaus who are doomed to pour water into a leaky vessel. Whereas gold they take fast hold of with teeth and claws and by all possible means.

CRATES. Accordingly, we remain even here in possession of our riches ; while they of all their money can bring no more than one obol, and that only to pay the ferryman.

XII

ALEXANDER, HANNIBAL, SCIPIO AND MINOS

ALEXANDER. I ought to take precedence of you, Libyan ! for I am a greater man than you.

HANNIBAL. That is precisely what I do not concede to you.

ALEXANDER. Let Minos then decide.

MINOS. Who are you then ?

ALEXANDER. He there is Hannibal of Carthage. I am Alexander, Philip's son.

MINOS. By Jupiter, two celebrated names ! But whence arose your dispute ?

ALEXANDER. It is about precedency. He there affirms himself to have been a better general than I. I say, that in the art of war I not only excelled him, but all that have gone before me, as all the world knows.

MINOS. Let each therefore plead his own cause. You, Libyan, speak first.

HANNIBAL. It is of great moment to me at present, O Minos, that I have here learnt to speak Greek ; so that the gentleman there even in that particular has not the advantage over me. I lay it down as a maxim that they merit the greatest commendation, who, notwithstanding they began with nothing, have attained to great eminence, and are deemed worthy of being invested with supreme command. I came with a small retinue into Spain, and served at first

under my brother, but was soon appointed to the highest posts in the army, because I was found to be the fittest for them. I afterwards conquered Celtiberia, subdued the western Gauls, then passed over the lofty mountains adjacent to the Po, razed the strong places that opposed my progress, destroyed several cities, overran the flat country of Italy, forced my way to the very suburbs of the metropolis, and slew in one day so many of the enemy that the rings taken from their fingers were measured by bushels,¹ and their dead bodies served for bridges over the rivers. All this I achieved without styling myself a son of Ammon, or wishing to pass for a god, and relating dreams at my mother's expense. But notwithstanding I professed to be nothing more than a mere man, I engaged with the greatest masters in the military art, and with the bravest soldiers in the world, and obtained not my conquests, over Medes and Armenians, who run away before they see an enemy pursuing them, and leave the victory to whoever will

¹ At the famous battle of Cannæ, where so many equestrian Romans were slain that their rings amounted in quantity to three and a half *modii*. This is related by Livy (*hist.* xxiii.) who however prudently adds: "The common and probable rumour went, that they did not amount to above half a *modius*" (about eight pints of our measure); and certainly even that was a great many! Lucian's Hannibal therefore considerably exaggerates the matter by measuring his booty of rings by the *medimnum*, one of which contained six Roman *modii*.

claim it. Alexander, it is true, availed himself of a sudden caprice of fortune to amplify and extend an empire he had inherited : but no sooner had he got the better of the unfortunate Darius at Issus and Arbela, but he laid aside the manners of his country, that he might be adored as a god in the oriental fashion, exchanged his former habits of life for the feminine softness of the Medes, and either polluted his own hands, at banquetings, with the blood of his friends, or ordered them to be loaded with chains and executed. I too stood at the head of my country, without assuming more authority than it committed to me ; and when it called me back, on the appearance of the enemy with a large fleet on our coast, I instantly obeyed, retired to the private station, and bore, even when unjustly condemned, my fate with resignation. And all this I did, without having enjoyed the advantage of a Grecian education, without having learnt to declaim passages of Homer, or having had an Aristotle for my tutor in philosophy ; but entirely by the assistance of a happy natural disposition. These are then the reasons, wherefore I affirm myself to be better than Alexander. If however his superiority consists only in having worn a diadem round his head, let his Macedonians pay him reverence for it ; but truly on that account he cannot be preferred before a valiant commander, who owes little to fortune but almost everything to prudence.

MINOS. This Hannibal has spoke like an honest man, and better than one should have expected of a Libyan. And you, Alexander, what have you to say to that ?

ALEXANDER. It would perhaps be the fittest course for me not at all to reply to such an insolent boaster ; since fame must have sufficiently informed you, what a great king I was, and how great a highwayman he. Nevertheless I will submit it to your judgment, how much or little precedence is due to him above me. Whilst yet very young, when I entered upon the government of an empire distracted by foreign aggressions, and shook by intestine divisions, I began by re-establishing tranquillity both within and without ; I punished the murderers of my father ; and after striking terror into the free cities of Greece by the destruction of Thebes, I was elected by them their commander in chief ; but thinking it too little a matter for me to rest contented with my Macedonian patrimony, I compassed in my imagination the whole circuit of the globe, and felt that it would be insupportable not to be the first of the kings of the earth. In these sentiments, with a small army I made an incursion into Asia, gained a signal victory on the Granicus, and after having subdued Lydia, Ionia, and Phrygia, and in short whatever else lay in my way, I proceeded to Issus, where Darius, with an army consisting of more thousands than I had single men to

oppose him, expected me.¹ You cannot have forgot, Minos, what numbers of dead I sent to you that day; at least the ferryman declares that his boat was not sufficient, and he was obliged to have recourse to the contrivance of joining rafts together for the purpose of wafting very great numbers of them over. On all these occasions I was ever the foremost to expose myself to danger, and held it an honour to receive wounds. And thus (to pass over what happened at Tyre and Arbela) I penetrated into India, captured their elephants, subdued Porus, and made the ocean the boundary of my empire. I even passed the Tanais, beat the Scythians, a bold and hardy people, accustomed to fight only on horseback, in a great battle. I was bountiful to my friends, and requited my enemies as they deserved: and if men took me for a god, they may very well be pardoned, as it was natural to believe me such from the greatness of my actions. After all, I died a king, whereas this man died an exile from his country at the court of Prusias, the Bithynian: a death worthy of the most perfidious and cruel

¹ This very circumstance is decisive against Alexander. What sort of an adversary must that be whose thousands suffer themselves to be beaten by one Greek? Hannibal therefore had great right to brag of the circumstance that he gained his victory over the best troops that were then in the world, not, like Alexander, over Medes and Armenians, who ran away before they descried an enemy in chase of them.

of mankind.¹ By what means he overcame the Italians, I forbear to mention ; certainly not by valour, but by artifice, perfidy and chicanery : for in a regular engagement and open fight he never performed anything. When he reproached me with luxury, he seemed to have forgot Capua, where the great man lavished away, in the company of loose women in indolence and pleasures, the fruits of his victories and the most favourable moments. Had I not, disdaining western conquests, turned my arms against the east, what mighty affair would it have been for me to have taken Italy without bloodshed, and subdued all the nations to Cadiz, aye, to the very heart of Libya ? But all these nations, who were already sufficiently tame to bow the neck under the yoke of one sole master, appeared to me not worth the trouble of a conquest ! Of much more that I might allege, this may suffice : do you, Minos, deliver your verdict.

SCIPIO. Not till you have also heard me.

MINOS. Who then are you, brave gentleman, and what countryman, that you interfere in this business ?

SCIPIO. The Italian general Scipio, who gained the great victory over Libya, and took Carthage.

¹ Here again Alexander makes a merit of his superior good fortune. Hannibal died a victim to the ingratitude of his fellow-citizens and the perfidy of the pusillanimous Prusias ; and the two epithets bestowed on him by Alexander he did not deserve, however ill the Roman historians may speak of him.

MINOS. And what then have you to say ?

SCIPIO. That I acknowledge myself inferior to Alexander, but greater than Hannibal, inasmuch as I overcame him, and constrained him to an ignominious flight. What insolence therefore in such a one to presume to contend for precedence with Alexander, with whom even Scipio, his vanquisher, is not worthy to be compared.

MINOS. By Jupiter, you speak like a reasonable man, Scipio ! I accordingly decree : that Alexander shall be the first, you the next after him, and Hannibal the third ; for even he is by no means to be despised.

XIII

ALEXANDER AND DIOGENES

DIOGENES. How is this, Alexander ? So you were forced to die as well as the rest of us !

ALEX. As you see, Diogenes. Is it anything so extraordinary that a mortal should die ?

DIOG. Ammon then was only passing a joke upon us, when he declared you his son, while you were only the son of Philip ?

ALEX. Undoubtedly ; I should scarce have died if Ammon had been my father.

DIOG. Yet in support of this pretence a tale was spread, that your mother Olympias had a mysterious intercourse with a dragon, that the dragon was seen in her bed, that you were

the fruit of it, and that Philip was erroneously reputed to be your father.

ALEX. These reports did reach my ears as they did yours ; but I perceive now, that of all that was said of my mother and the priest of Ammon not a word was true.

DIOG. Their lies however were of great service to you in your enterprises ; for many submitted to you merely because they took you for a god. —But tell me, who succeeds you in that prodigious empire which cost you so much trouble ?

ALEX. I cannot tell, my good Diogenes ; I had made no dispositions about it, except that when at the last gasp I gave my seal-ring to Perdiccas. —What makes you laugh, Diogenes ?

DIOG. What should make me laugh, but that, while I behold you thus, I remember all the fooleries acted by our Greeks, to please you ; how they flattered you from your first acceding to the government, chose you their commander in chief against the barbarians, some even associated you with the twelve great deities,¹ and built temples, and offered sacrifice to the supposed son of the dragon. But, with permission, where did the Macedonians bury you ?

ALEX. This is the third day that I have been lying in state at Babylon. In the meantime

¹ The orator Demades was the first who was so devoid of shame as to make this proposal openly to the Athenians ; the Athenians were thoughtless enough to confirm his decree, and several other cities followed their example.

Ptolemy, the captain of my satellites, has promised, as soon as the present disturbances will afford him leisure, to convey me to Egypt, and inter me there, in order to procure me a place among the Egyptian deities.

DIOG. And I shall not laugh, Alexander, when I see you, even in the kingdom of the dead still so silly as to wish to be an Anubis or Osiris ! But soothe yourself with no such expectations, my divine sir ! He that has once crossed our lake, and entered within the mouth of Tartarus cannot return : Æacus takes too much care, and there is no joking with Cerberus. But are not you greatly surprised, when you look round you and perceive what all is come to, the satellites and satraps, and all the treasures and the kneeling nations, and the great Babylon and Bactria, together with all the elephants ?—and the high triumphal car on which you shone and were gazed at as a meteor ? and the regal diadem on the head, and the purple flowing down in ample folds, when you think upon the glorious life and the majesty and the fame which you were forced to leave behind you ? That may well cause you to lament !—Why do you weep, silly man ? Did not your wise Aristotle teach you how unsubstantial all those gifts of fortune are ?

ALEX. Oh, that wise man, as you call him, was the vilest of all my flatterers ! Let me alone, to say what Aristotle was ! For I best know how much he was perpetually desiring to have of me,

what letters he wrote to me, how he abused my vainglorious thirst of knowledge, how he was always complimenting me, and now praised me for my beauty (as if that too was in the number of real goods), now on account of my exploits and my riches : for even riches he pronounced to be a real good, to palliate the ignominy of his accepting so much from me. My good Diogenes, the fellow was a charlatan, who knew how to act his part in a masterly manner, no sage ! All the benefit I reap from his wisdom is, that I now bewail the loss of those things which you have enumerated, because he taught me to regard them as the greatest blessings.

DIOG. Do you know what ? Since we have no hellebore growing here, I will prescribe another remedy for your grief. Repair to Lethe, and swallow some copious draughts of its water ; that will infallibly render you insensible to the loss of the Aristotelian goods.—But are not those Clitus and Calesthenes, whom I see, with some others hurrying towards you with such fury as if they would enforce the law of retaliation against you, and tear you to pieces in return for the injuries they formerly suffered from you ? Strike therefore into this other road to Lethe, and, as I said, drink till these phantasies leave you !

XIV

ALEXANDER AND PHILIP

PHILIP. Now, Alexander, that you are dead, you will not perhaps deny that you are my son ; for Ammon's son would not have died.

ALEX. I never doubted that Philip was my father and Amyntas my great-grandsire : I merely acquiesced in the oracle, as it was of service to me in the prosecution of my designs.

PHILIP. How ? What service could it be of to you, knowingly to suffer yourself to be cheated by priests ?

ALEX. That is not what I would say ; but the barbarous nations with whom I had to do were imposed upon by it, and did not dare to resist the supposed god : so that it was an easy matter for me to master them.

PHILIP. Consequently you acquire but little honour from your easy victories over all that cowardly, miserably armed rabble, planted behind a broad shield of platted oziers : if you had had to contend with Greeks ; if, like me, you had been to engage with the Phocæans, Bœotians, and Athenians, with the heavy-armed infantry of the Arcadians, with the cavalry of the Thes-salians, with the acontistes of the Elæans, and the peltastes of the Mantineans, with Thracians, Illyrians, and Pœonians, then you might think you had done something great. But these Medes,

Persians, Chaldeans, these effeminate, with their golden accoutrements, rather decorated than armed men,—know you not, that they were defeated long before you, by the ten thousand Greeks, headed by Clearchus, and had not courage enough to encounter so small a body, but ran away ere a dart of the Greeks could reach them.

ALEX. I should think however, my honoured father, that the Scythians and the elephants of the Indians were adversaries not altogether contemptible. And I may be permitted to observe, that I settled my business with them without having recourse to nefarious artifices ; that I neither exasperated the people against one another, nor purchased my conquests with bribery, of traitors, nor swore false oaths, nor broke my given word, nor otherwise to promote my private views committed an act of treachery. Besides, it redounds more to my honour than to my disgrace, that I generally brought over the Greek to my side without bloodshed ; and how I chastised the Thebans you may probably have heard.

PHILIP. I know it all : I heard it from that very Clitus, whom you ran through the body with a halberd across the table, because on a comparison that had just been made between your exploits and mine, he had the courage to give me the preference. It is even said, that you laid aside the Macedonian coat of mail, to

put on the Persian caftan, wore the high turban, and expected the generous, free-born Macedonians to prostrate themselves before you after the oriental custom; and what was most ridiculous of all, you even aped the manners of the conquered. Of your other exploits, as for example, your shutting up learned men with lions, and of your honourable marriages, and of your immoderate affection for Hephæstion,¹ I had rather say nothing. The only act I heard of to commend in you is, that you were continent respecting the wife of Darius, notwithstanding her great beauty, and that you took care of his mother and daughters.

ALEX. You find therefore nothing praiseworthy in my fondness for perilous adventures, and in my having, for example, been the first that leaped from the ramparts of Oxydracæ into the city, and

¹ Alexander carried his impatience at the death of that favourite, so far, that he cropped the manes of all the horses and mules in Ecbatana, pulled down the pinnacles from the ramparts of all the neighbouring cities, and the physician who had the misfortune to survive him, he caused to be crucified. He assigned ten thousand talents to the erection of a monument to his memory, obtained an order from Jupiter Ammon, through an oracle, to sacrifice to him as a hero or demi-god, and the first sacrifice he offered up to him, were the Cossæans, a people of Media, whom he had conquered about that time; and, to render the consecration of Hephæstion more solemn, he caused their women and children to be slaughtered with them. Plutarch in the *Life of Alexander*.

so often voluntarily taken positions where I was most exposed to wounds ?

PHILIP. No, Alexander ! Not that I hold it unbecoming a king in order to set the example to his army, occasionally to expose himself first, and bear away honourable wounds : but because it was least of all in character for you. For, since you passed for a god, must you not, if you were seen wounded, and carried off from the field bleeding and fainting, appear ridiculous in the eyes of the beholders ? Ammon turning out a convicted impostor and lying prophet, and his priests audacious flatterers ! For who could refrain from laughing on seeing a son of Jupiter fainting away, and wanting the physician's aid ? And now, seeing you are absolutely dead, think you not, that numbers of people will cruelly scoff and jeer at these mummeries, when they behold the corpse of the deity lying like a clod, and proceeding to corruption and putrefaction as other carcasses do ? Not to mention, that the pretended utility of this imposture, namely, in facilitating your enterprises, has been rather prejudicial to the fame of your exploits ; for everything that you might have achieved was always less than what might be expected from a god.

ALEX. Men, notwithstanding, think otherwise of me, and compare me to Bacchus and Hercules : and, in fact, I am the only one that surmounted those rocks inaccessible even to the

birds,¹ which neither of those two could ascend.

PHILIP. How is this? You are falling again all at once into the tone of Ammon's son. Are not you ashamed, Alexander, to compare yourself to Hercules and Bacchus? And will you not at length wean yourself from that arrogant bombast, learn to know yourself, and be conscious that you are of the dead?

XV

ACHILLES AND ANTILOCHUS

ANTILOCHUS. Achilles, what you lately said to Ulysses in relation to death,² was, it must be confessed, very unworthy the pupil of Charon and Phoenix. I heard you say, you had rather be a day-labourer in the upper world, to a poor man, who himself was forced to work hard for a scanty maintenance, than king of all the dead. If some base dastardly Phrygian talked in such a manner, nothing had been to be said upon it: but, that the son of Peleus, that a hero, who formerly more than any other had a predilection for perilous adventures, should think so meanly of himself, is a great shame, and in direct opposi-

¹ To which the Greeks therefore gave the appellation Aornos or Aornis. See *Q. Curt.*, viii. 11, and his commentators.

² *Odyssey*, xi. 485, etc.

tion to what you achieved in life. For it was entirely at your option to have played the king for a long series of years in obscure repose among your Phthiotians, but you voluntarily chose a premature and honourable death.

ACHILLES. O son of the wise Nestor, at that time I prized that wretched chimæra, glory, higher than life, I had not yet experienced how affairs stand here. But now I know, that this glory can be of absolutely no utility to us, whatever people there above may rhapsodise about it. Among the dead, one is of as much worth as another, dear Antilochus ! Beauty and strength are gone ! We are all immersed in the same darkness, without the least preference or distinction. The Trojan dead fear me as little as the Grecian dead honour me ; here the most perfect equality reigns ; the bravest and the basest man, one is dead as well as the other. This is what afflicts me, and makes me repine that I am not a day-labourer and alive.

ANTILOCHUS. But what is to be done, dear Achilles ? Nature has thought fit that we should all die. Nothing therefore remains for us but to submit to the decree without murmuring. Besides, do not you see how many of us, your former comrades, are already around you, and even Ulysses will shortly arrive. It is however always a comfort to have companions in affliction, and to see that it fares no better with others than with ourselves. Are not also Hercules and

Meleager and other great men of that stamp, here, none of whom certainly would wish to return into life, if it could be done, in order to be employed as labourers by poor starvelings who have themselves nothing to live upon, for daily wages.

ACHILLES. I recognize in this address the just notions of my old comrade : but however that be, the recollection of what I have lost with life, torments me, and I am sure that there is not one of you that is not of the same sentiments. If you do not confess it, so much the worse for you, for your very silence adds to your affliction.

ANTILOCHUS. By no means, Achilles ; but so much the better ! We see that complaints cannot relieve us ; we therefore choose rather to suffer in silence, than make ourselves ridiculous by such wishes as yours.¹

XVI

DIOGENES AND HERCULES

DIOGENES. Can that be Hercules ? By Hercules it is, and no other ! It is his bow, his club, his lion's skin, his stature. But how can the son of Jupiter be dead ?—With permission, O thou victor in the most glorious triumphs, be so good as to tell me, whether you are dead. While I was alive I sacrificed to you as a god.—

¹ A very salutary lesson to us who are alive.

HERCULES. And in that you did very right : for the real Hercules lives with the beautiful footed Hebe in heaven, crowned with immortal youth, among the gods a god. I am only his form.

DIOGENES. What do you mean by that, the form of the god Hercules ? And how is it possible that one can be on one half a god, and on the other be dead ?

HERCULES. Very possible. For it is not he that is dead, but only I, his figure.

DIOGENES. I comprehend : he gave you up to Pluto instead of another man, and who are you ? You are, so to speak, dead in his name and on his behalf ?

HERCULES. Thereabouts.

DIOGENES. But Æacus is otherwise a man that keeps a sharp look out : how came it that he did not perceive the fraud, and suffered a spurious Hercules to pass for the real ?

HERCULES. It came hence ; because I am perfectly like him.

DIOGENES. There you are right ; so perfectly like, that you might be him himself. Reflect, that it may be exactly the reverse ; that you are Hercules, and your form may be married to the fair Hebe among the gods.

HERCULES. You are a saucy fellow, and an impertinent witling ! If you do not leave off your jeers you shall presently feel who the god is whose form I am !

DIOGENES. I see you are ready to strike : but what have I to apprehend from you, since I am dead ? Tell me however, I conjure you by your Hercules, whilst he lived were you his form with him ? or in life did you make only one person, and split after death ? he flying off to the gods, and you, his form, travelling, as it should seem, to the world beneath.

HERCULES. I should not have engaged in argument at all with such an obstinate quibbler : I will however just tell you, what of Hercules was of Amphitryon, that died ; but what was from Jupiter, that is in heaven with the gods.

DIOGENES. Now the case is much clearer. Alcmena at the same time bore two Herculese, one by Amphitryon and one by Jupiter : you were therefore properly twins, by different fathers and one mother ; and that was it, why nothing was said of it till now.

HERCULES. Not so, blockhead ! We both compose him, the sole Hercules.

DIOGENES. That is not quite so easy to conceive, how two Herculese could be so compounded as to make but one ; you must have been then only a kind of centaur, a man and a god grown together into one being.

HERCULES. Do not you know then that every man is in like manner compounded of two parts, soul and body ? What therefore should hinder the soul from being in heaven, whilst I, the mortal part, am among the dead ?

DIOGENES. That would be fair reasoning, my noble Amphitryoniade, if you were a body ; but as it is you are nothing more than an incorporeal form. I perceive, that at last you will even produce a triple Hercules.

HERCULES. And why a triple ?

DIOGENES. Somehow thus : one of them is in heaven ; you, the form are with us ; and the body was burnt to ashes on Eta ; that makes, however, I should think, three. It rests with you therefore to find a third father for your body.

HERCULES. You are an impudent sophistical fellow.—By what other title are you to be known ? who are you ?

DIOGENES. The form of Diogenes of Sinope : I myself however keep company, by Jupiter ! though not with the immortal gods, yet with the best of the dead ; and divert myself with laughing at Homer and all such hair-splittings.

XVII

MENIPPUS AND TANTALUS ¹

MENIPPUS. Why do you howl so, Tantalus ? Why do you stand by the pond side, weeping and lamenting at such a rate ?

¹ Here again Homer is forced to pay the fiddler. The passage brought in this Dialogue before the tribunal of common sense, is found likewise in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*.

TANTALUS. Because I am perishing with thirst, dear Menippus.

MENIPPUS. Are you then so completely lazy, as not to stoop down to drink, or even only to take up some water in the hollow of your hand ?

TANTALUS. Stoop as low as I will it is to no purpose ; the water flees from me as soon as it perceives that I approach it ; and even if I take up some and bring it to my mouth, before I can moisten my lips with it, it slips between my fingers, and runs away, and my hand is instantly as dry as before.

MENIPPUS. That is a very strange occurrence, good Tantalus. But why are you so eager after drink, since you have no longer a body ? For what formerly rendered eating and drinking necessary, is buried in Lydia ; and you, the naked soul, how can you hunger and thirst ?

TANTALUS. Therein my punishment consists, that my soul is just as thirsty as if it were a body.

MENIPPUS. Well then, since thirst as you say is imposed upon you as a punishment, we must believe it. But what is there so dreadful in it ? You are not afraid of dying for want of drinking ? At least I see no other kingdom of the dead, to which one can be summoned by death in this.

TANTALUS. There you are right ; but that constitutes a part of my damnation, to be tormented with an avidity to drink without having occasion for it.

MENIPPUS. You are really delirious, Tantalus !

You are in want of a draught, it is true, but no other than a strong draught of hellebore. Your distemper is the direct reverse of that experienced by such as are bit by mad dogs ; they have a dread of water ; you of thirst.

TANTALUS. If I had but a good gulp of hellebore, I certainly would not reject it.

MENIPPUS. Let the desire spend itself, good Tantalus : it fares with you as with all others of the dead, and nothing particular is done in your case. But indeed all do not thirst like you, as a punishment, but only cannot drink because the water will not wait for them !

XVIII

MENIPPUS AND MERCURY

MENIPPUS. Where then are those beautiful men and women of whom there was so much talk above, Mercury ? Be so good as to conduct me to them, as I am quite a new-comer and know not how to find my way about.

MERCURY. I have not time for it, dear Menippus : look however yonder ; rather more to the right : there are Hyacinthus and Narcissus, and Nireus, and Achilles, and Tyro, and Helena, and Leda, in short all the celebrated beauties of antiquity, all together in a cluster.

MENIPPUS. I see nothing but bare bones and skulls, in which nothing is to be discriminated.



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HELEN OF TROY

MERCURY. Yet these bones, which appear to you so contemptible, have been extolled by the poets to this day.

MENIPPUS. But shew me at least Helen ; for of myself I cannot find her out.

MERCURY. That skull there is the beautiful Helen.

MENIPPUS. That then was the cause that all Greece was stowed together in a thousand ships, that so many Greeks and barbarians were slain, and so many cities razed to the ground ?

MERCURY. My good Menippus, you should have seen her when alive ! You would for certain (as well as the old counsellors of Priam in the *Iliad*) have confessed, that Nemesis herself could not take it amiss,

if such celestial charms

For nine long years should set the world in arms.

He that looks upon a withered flower can indeed not discover how beautiful it was, while standing in full bloom and brilliant in its natural dies.

MENIPPUS. What I wonder at, Mercury, is how it came to pass, that the Greeks did not perceive that it was for the sake of such a transitory and evanescent object, that they gave themselves all that trouble.

MERCURY. I have no time to philosophise with you, Menippus ; look you therefore for a place where you choose to lodge. I must go and fetch over the rest of the dead.

XIX

ÆACUS, PROTESILAUS, MENELAUS AND PARIS

ÆACUS. How is this, Protesilaus ? Why do you attack Helen, as if you were going to strangle her ?

PROTESILAUS. Because I owe my death to her : and on her account I was forced to leave my house only half-built, and my young wife, a few days after our marriage, a widow.¹

ÆACUS. Then apply to Menelaus, who dispatched you to Troy for the sake of such a woman.

PROTESILAUS. That is true ; he shall pay me handsomely for it.

MENELAUS. Not I, my good man, but in strict justice, Paris ; who against the laws of hospitality and every law in the world, while I was his host, carried off my wife. He deserves to be strangled, not only by you but by all, Greeks and barbarians, for by that act he was guilty of the death of so many brave men.

PROTESILAUS. That is likewise true ! To you then I will apply, detested Paris, and never quit you so long as I can use my hands.

PARIS. In that you would be very much in the wrong, Protesilaus : and the more since we have both taken up love as our profession, and consequently are brother artists in that art which is

¹ Homer's *Iliad*, Book ii. 698, etc.

practised by the same god. For you must know, that love is somewhat involuntary, or rather that it is a divinity which carries us whithersoever he will, and against whom no resistance can avail.

PROTESILAUS. You are right ! Could I but get hold of the god of love to tell him this !

ÆACUS. I will tell you in his name what he with good reason can urge in his justification. He can say : that Paris was in love with Helen, was certainly no fault of his : but of your death, Protesilaus, no one was guilty but yourself. Who bid you leave your young wife and run scampering to Troy, and then to be so fool-hardy as to expose yourself the foremost to danger, so that presently after the landing you fell a victim to your immoderate lust of glory ?

PROTESILAUS. Now, Æacus, let me say in my own justification upon better grounds, that I am not to blame for it, but fate, and what Clotho has decreed us from the commencement of our lives.

ÆACUS. Rightly said ! Why therefore complain of these innocent people ?

XX

MENIPPUS AND ÆACUS

MENIPPUS. For Pluto's sake, Æacus, be so good as to shew me everything that is to be seen in the kingdom of the dead.

ÆACUS. Everything, my good Menippus, would not be so easy ; but some information respecting the principal objects I will readily communicate to you. Cerberus there you are already acquainted with, and the ferryman that brought you over ; the Stygian lake and the fire-stream you likewise saw on your first arrival.

MENIPPUS. I know all that, and likewise know that you are doorkeeper here : the king also I have already seen, and the furies. I should deem it a favour, if you would shew me the men of the old times, particularly those that are most talked of in the upper world.

ÆACUS. This, here, is Agamemnon, that yonder Achilles ; this, somewhat nearer, facing us Idomeneus, that next him Ulysses ; then follow Ajax, Diomed, and the other chieftains of the Greeks in those times.

MENIPPUS. Ey, ey, master Homer ! What is now become of the heroes of your rhapsodies ? How miserably they lie all mingled together upon the earth, deprived of beauty and strength, in truth *weak heads* as you called them ! so weak, that they might be blown with a breath to ashes ! But who is he there, Æacus ?

ÆACUS. That is Cyrus, and this Croesus ; that beside him Sardanapalus, he above the two Midas, and that yonder Xerxes.

MENIPPUS. What ? Such a creature as you, put all Greece in consternation and dismay, by the conceit of throwing a bridge across the

Hellespont, and sailing over the tops of mountains? What a deplorable figure there does Croesus make! And Sardanapalus too! I have a great inclination to give him a sound slap on the face, if you would give me leave.

ÆACUS. Not upon any account! You would smash his skull to a jelly, it is so soft.

MENIPPUS. But I may spit in his face?

ÆACUS. Would not you wish to see the sages?

MENIPPUS. Oh, certainly. I shall be much obliged to you.

ÆACUS. The first here is Pythagoras.

MENIPPUS. Accept my homage, Euphorbus, or Apollo, or by whatever appellation you please rather to be greeted!

PYTHAGORAS. Kind thanks, Menippus; the like salutation!

MENIPPUS. You have no longer perhaps your golden thigh?

PYTHAGORAS. No verily. But have you anything to eat in your knapsack? Let us see.

MENIPPUS. Nothing, my dearest friend, but beans, and them you dare not eat.

PYTHAGORAS. Give me some, however. Since I have been among the dead, a few alterations have happened in my notions: I have here learnt, that beans and the heads of our parents have nothing in common between them.

ÆACUS. This is Solon, that yonder the famous Thales, and close to him Pittacus, and the rest; there are in all seven of them, you see.

MENIPPUS. And amongst all the dead that I have seen, the only ones that have a serene and cheerful countenance. But he yonder, covered all over with ashes and blisters, resembling a cake baked upon the embers, who is he ?

ÆACUS. That is Empedocles, who arrived among us half roasted from out the gullet of

MENIPPUS. Hey dey, my noble master, with the brazen foot,¹ what was the reason of your throwing yourself into the crater of Ætna ?

EMPEDOCLES. An access of black bile, Menippus.

MENIPPUS. Not at all ; I know better : vanity and ostentation and a species of folly, which you should have expelled by hellebore, deservedly thus burnt you up, slippers and all, to a cinder. Your cunning device availed you nothing ; for it came to light, that you died like others.—But, good Æacus, where is then Socrates ?

ÆACUS. He is generally gossiping with Nestor and Palamedes, still carrying on his old game.

MENIPPUS. I would fain have the sight of him, if he were anywhere hereabouts.

3. Do you see that bald-pate yonder ?

¹ The epithet χαλκόπους, which Homer applies to horses (*Iliad*, xiii. 23), and Sophocles in his *Electra* (ver. 492) to the furies, is here jocosely bestowed by the sarcastic Menippus upon Empedocles. It refers to the brazen slippers with which that philosopher armed himself for his intended investigation of Ætna's crater against the heat of the ground, and which on his having the misfortune to fall in, at the next eruption are said to have been thrown out.

MENIPPUS. I see nothing but bald-pates ; that is the characteristic that will serve for all the dead.

ÆACUS. I mean him with the flat apish nose.

MENIPPUS. Neither does that help me : they have all such noses.

SOCRATES. Are you inquiring for me, Menippus ?

MENIPPUS. Yes, Socrates, indeed I am.

SOCRATES. How go affairs at Athens ?

MENIPPUS. There are great numbers of young people, who affect to philosophise ; and to judge from their dress and their gait, they should be taken really for great philosophers.

SOCRATES. I have seen very many of that sort.

MENIPPUS. You must likewise, I think, have seen in what condition Aristippus and Plato were when they came hither ! The former smelt strong of pomade, and the latter had learnt to play the courtier with the tyrants in Sicily.

SOCRATES. But what do people think of me ?

MENIPPUS. You are a happy mortal, Socrates, as to that ! All the world believes you were an admirable man, and knew everything, notwithstanding (since methinks the truth should be declared) you knew nothing.

SOCRATES. That I always told them myself ; but they took it only for irony.

MENIPPUS. Who are those that are pressing towards you ?

SOCRATES. Charmides, Phædrus, and the son of Clinias.¹

MENIPPUS. Ey, ey, Socrates, I see you still carry on your old trade; handsome folks are always high in your estimation.

SOCRATES. How can I better amuse myself? I thought you were come to lodge with us, Menippus.

MENIPPUS. No. I shall take up my residence with Croesus and Sardanapalus; for I think it will afford me much entertainment to hear their groans and lamentations.

ÆACUS. And I shall return to my post; lest while I am off my guard, some of my dead may privily slip away. Another time you shall see more, Menippus.

MENIPPUS. Do so, Æacus; this may suffice for the present.

XXI

MENIPPUS AND CERBERUS

MENIPPUS. Cousin Cerberus, since I belong to the canine race, tell me for our relation's sake, tell me I adjure you by Styx! how did Socrates behave when he came down to you? For, as you are a god, you must naturally do more than bark, and, whenever you please, can make yourself understood in human speech.

CERBERUS. While yet at some distance, dear

¹ Alcibiades.

Menippus, he certainly appeared to advance with unaltered countenance, as desirous of shewing to those who stood outside the mouth of Tartarus that he had absolutely no fear of death at all.¹ But as soon as he was descending in the shaft, and perceived how dark all around him was, and he being tardy on account of the hemloc, when I bit him by the foot and pulled him completely in : then he whimpered like a little infant, and presently after set up a doleful cry about his own children, and made the most curious faces in the world.

MENIPPUS. The man was then after all only a sophist, and his contempt of death mere grimace ?

CERBERUS. Nothing more ! Perceiving now that he positively must die, he put on a magnanimous appearance, and made it appear as if he voluntarily acquiesced in what he was absolutely forced to undergo—in order to be admired by the spectators. I may say in general of all these people that pretend to be somewhat more than others : up to the brink of the mouth, they are bold and courageous ; but their behaviour, when they are fairly entered, evidently proves them the reverse.

MENIPPUS. How did I seem to behave at my first coming down ?

CERBERUS. You alone did honour to the family by your behaviour, and before you, Diogenes ;

¹ Alluding to the discourse which Plato, in his *Phædo*, reports him to have held immediately before his death.

because you did not come as if you were dragged and shoved down, but voluntarily, laughing and making game of everybody that takes on so tragically in the affair.

XXII

CHARON, MENIPPUS, AND MERCURY

CHARON. Pay me my fare, scoundrel !

MENIPPUS. Bawl as long as you like, Charon !

CHARON. Pay me, I say ; do you think I am to bring you over for nothing ?

MENIPPUS. He that has nothing can give nothing.

CHARON. Who in the world is so poor, as not to have two farthings at command ?

MENIPPUS. Whether there is such a one I cannot say ; but as to myself I know that I have them not.

CHARON. By Pluto, I will throttle you, if you do not pay me !

MENIPPUS. Then I will crack your skull with my stick.

CHARON. So you imagine you have had this long passage for nothing ?

MENIPPUS. Mercury, who brought me to you, may likewise pay for me.

MERCURY. By Jupiter, I should make a fine office of it, if I must pay for all the dead I bring !

CHARON. I shall not let you get off so. I will not quit you.

MENIPPUS. As to that, you have my leave to haul your boat on shore, and wait as long as you please ; but how will you receive of me what I have not got ?

CHARON. Did not you know then what you ought to have brought ?

MENIPPUS. I knew it well ; but I had nothing to bring. How could I help dying ?

CHARON. You will be the only one that could ever boast of being ferried over for nothing.

MENIPPUS. Not so for nothing, my gallant captain : did not I work at the pump and help to row, and was not I the only one of all the passengers, that did not disturb you with crying and howling ?

CHARON. All that has nothing to do with my fare ; you must pay your halfpenny, it cannot be otherwise.

MENIPPUS. The best advice I can give you then, is to carry me back into life.

CHARON. That would be charming ! That I am to lose my money, and get a good beating from Æacus into the bargain !

MENIPPUS. Then let me alone ; do not be troublesome.

CHARON. Let us see what you have got in your wallet.

MENIPPUS. Lupines, and a Hecate-supper.

CHARON. Where in the world did you pick up

this impudent dog's-face, Mercury ? During the whole time of the passage, he has not for one moment held his tongue, laughing and jeering at all the passengers, and singing merry songs, while all the rest were crying.

MERCURY. Then, Charon, you do not know what a great man you have brought over ? He is a free man in the proper sense, and asks nothing of anybody. In one word, it is Menippus.

CHARON. If ever I catch you again——

MENIPPUS. Yes, if ! You shall certainly not catch me twice !

XXIII

PLUTO, PROSERPINE, AND PROTESILAUS

PROTESILAUS. Oh, unbounded lord and king of the regions of the dead, our Jupiter ; and thou, exalted daughter of Ceres, let the supplications of a lover find favour in your sight !¹

PLUTO. What do you desire of us ? Who are you ?

PROTESILAUS. I am Protesilaus the son of Iphicles, of Phylace, one of those who marched with the other Greeks against Troy ; and the first that was killed there. I beg therefore permission for a short time to return into life.

PLUTO. You are then in love with life, my good Protesilaus ? Such lovers we have here in plenty ;

¹ The tale that forms the basis of this piece of pleasantry is related by Hyginus, *fab.* 103.

but they love an object, which none of them can obtain.

PROTESILAUS. I, O Pluto, am not in love with life, but with my young wife, whom I left immediately after our marriage in the bridal chamber, when I embarked for Troy. Unfortunately I fell, the first moment after landing, by Hector's hand ; and now the longing I have for my little dear, leaves me no repose, gracious sovereign, and if I may become visible to her only for a short space, I will willingly return.

PLUTO. You have therefore not drank of Lethe, Protesilaus ?

PROTESILAUS. Oh, certainly, gracious sovereign ; but my love is stronger than the efficacy of its stream.

PLUTO. Only have patience ; she will in due time be here, and save you the necessity of travelling up to her.

PROTESILAUS. I cannot possibly wait for that, Pluto ! You yourself have been in love, and therefore know the impatience of a lover.

PLUTO. What would it avail you to become alive again for a single day ? Presently after your uneasiness would be greater than before.

PROTESILAUS. I flatter myself, that I should be able to persuade her to accompany me hither to you ; and so for one subject you would in this short space obtain two.

PLUTO. You require what is contrary to all rule ; it has never been done.

PROTESILAUS. Permit me, O Pluto, to assist your memory. On this very account did not you restore to Orpheus his Eurydice? And was not my cousin Alcestis, purely to please Hercules, sent back into life? ¹

PLUTO. You would then present yourself with that ugly bare skull before your beautiful bride? How can you hope to be admitted by her, since she would not at all recognise you? Most assuredly she would be frightened at you, and run away; and so you would take a long journey to no purpose.

PROSERPINE. Could not you, my dear, provide a remedy for that, if you would please to order Mercury, as soon as he shall have brought up Protesilaus into daylight, to touch him with his wand, and make him again the same handsome young man, that he was when he came out from the nuptial chamber?

PLUTO. Well then; forasmuch as Proserpine is of that opinion, take him up again, Mercury, and qualify him for a bridegroom. But, hark you, forget not, that you have leave of absence only for one day.

¹ The relationship rests upon their common descent from Æolus. Alcestis was the great-granddaughter, and Protesilaus the great-grandson of that deity.

XXIV

DIOGENES AND MAUSOLUS

DIOGENES. Hear you, Carian¹ ; why do you give yourself such haughty airs, as if you thought yourself superior to any of us ?

MAUSOLUS. In the first place, Mr Sinopian, because I was king of all Caria, and ruler of several districts of Lydia ; I enlarged my dominions by subduing various islands, extended my conquests as far as Miletus, and over-ran the greater part of Ionia. Besides, I had a personal superiority : I was beautiful, tall of stature, and of so robust a constitution, as enabled me to sustain all the hardships and fatigues of war. To be brief, the principal point is, I have a prodigious monument raised over me at Halicarnassus, which for magnitude and beauty has not its equal in the whole world, and is decorated with the most exquisite figures of men and horses, all carved to such a degree of perfection, and in such exceeding fine marble as you will not easily find even in a temple.

¹ Mausolus, King of Caria, made a considerable figure, in the time of the Persian king Artaxerxes Mnemon, in the lesser Asia. The city of Halicarnassus, which he chose for his residence, was rendered by him one of the most beautiful and magnificent in the world. The monument erected to him by his consort Artemisia, the second of that name, obtained, as everybody knows, a place among what are styled the Seven Wonders of the World. The remains can now be seen at the British Museum.

And of all this have I no right to be proud, think you ?

DIOGENES. Therefore of your crown, of your figure, and of the ponderosity of your monument ?

MAUSOLUS. So I should think, by Jupiter !

DIOGENES. But, my handsome Mausolus, of your beauty and strength nothing more is to be seen, and if I should call in question your advantageous figure, you would not be able to give the judge a reason why your skull is more beautiful than mine. Both are peeled and bare, our teeth grin on both sides in like manner, and instead of eyes we have both empty holes and flat, apish noses. As to your monument,¹ and the costly marble of which it is built, the inhabitants of Halicarnassus may certainly have reason to shew it to strangers, and to think much of themselves for possessing so great a work of art within their walls : but, my comely gentleman, what sort of enjoyment you should have of it, I see not ; you should then only say, that you bear a heavier load than the rest of us, since you have an enormous heap of stones lying upon you.

MAUSOLUS. Then all this must go for nothing ; and Mausolus shall be neither greater nor less than Diogenes ?

DIOGENES. As to the last point, my noble sir, no ; that equality I must object to. For Mausolus will wimper and whine as often as he is reminded of the objects that composed his

¹ See Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxx.

superiority and his happiness in life ; whereas Diogenes will laugh at him. Mausolus talks of the monument that Artemisia, his wife and sister, caused to be erected to him at Halicarnassus : Diogenes does not even know whether his corpse has got a tomb anywhere, and cares nothing about it. But on the other hand he left behind him, among the worthiest of mankind, the remembrance that he lived the life of a man : and this monument, O thou first of all thy slavish Carians, is loftier and rests on a more solid base than thine !

XXV

NIREUS, THERSITES, AND MENIPPUS

NIREUS. Here comes Menippus ! He can immediately settle our dispute, which is the handsomest of us. Sincerely, Menippus, do not you think that I am handsomer than he ?

MENIPPUS. Who are you then ? That is, methinks, what I ought to know first of all.

NIREUS. Nireus and Thersites.

MENIPPUS. Which of the two is Nireus, and

NIREUS, etc. In this Dialogue Lucian again introduces a pair of Homeric persons, Nircus the handsomest of the men that marched against Ilion, as Homer says, and Thersites the most misshapen and hideous in the whole army, to dispute before Menippus, as arbitrator, the superiority in beauty, which Thersites will not concede to the handsome Nircus.

which Thersites? For at present that is not apparent.

THERSITES. I have therefore already gained thus much, that I am like you, and your superiority therefore cannot be so great, as blind Homer makes it to be, in styling you the comeliest of all the Greeks. Needs there any stronger proof, than that, notwithstanding my sugar-loaf head and my few straggling hairs, I appear to the judge nowise inferior to you? But view us deliberately, Menippus, and then say which you deem the handsomest.

NIREUS. Naturally me, the son of Charopus and Aglæe.

Nireus, in faultless shape and blooming grace,
The loveliest youth of all the Grecian race.

MENIPPUS. At least you are not the loveliest of them that are come under ground, methinks; the bones are alike, and between your skull and that of Thersites, there is perhaps no other difference than that yours is more liable to be broke; for it looks so thin, soft and unmanly, that one should rather suppose it a woman's skull.

NIREUS. Only ask Homer what sort of a man I was, when I served among the Greeks before Troy.

MENIPPUS. Dreams, my good Nireus! I know only what I see and what you at present are; what you then were they know best who lived with you.

NIREUS. Here then I am not more beautiful than others, Menippus ?

MENIPPUS. Here nobody is beautiful, neither you nor another : in the country of the dead all are equal.

THERSITES. I for my part am satisfied. That is all I desire.

XXVI

MENIPPUS AND CHIRON

MENIPPUS. I am told, Chiron, that though you are by birth a god, you requested to die.

CHIRON. You are told what is very true, Menippus.

MENIPPUS. How came you to have such an affection for death, which to the generality is so unamiable ?

CHIRON. To a man of your understanding, I may speak out. Immortality was no longer pleasant to me.

MENIPPUS. How ? Was not it pleasant to you to behold sunshine ?

CHIRON. No, Menippus. To me nothing is pleasing without variety ; always one uniform pleasure is to my mind no pleasure. Accordingly, always to live, as was my case, and always to behold the same sun, and always to nourish myself in the same manner, and to see the seasons and whatever they bring with them

always revolving in the same order of succession, always one after another in perpetual rotation, and always to foreknow to-day that to-morrow will be just the same—this at length grew tiresome, and at last I was absolutely weary of it ; for, I repeat it, pleasure lies not in the enjoyment of the same subject, however agreeable it may be, but in the continual change of new objects.

MENIPPUS. Well observed, Chiron ! But how do you find then your situation here in Orcus, since you are come hither of your own choice ?

CHIRON. Not unpleasant, Menippus ; that universal equality that reigns here, has in it somewhat popular that pleases me, and in general it is all one to me, whether it is clear or obscure around me. Besides, here, where we neither hunger nor thirst, I am relieved from the necessity of eating and drinking, which was indispensable there above.

MENIPPUS. Take heed, Chiron, lest you run counter to yourself, and are at last at the same point, from which you wished to depart.

CHIRON. How so ?

MENIPPUS. If you were disgusted with the life there above, because everything was repeatedly the same, you will be soon satiated here, where everything is also a perpetual repetition of the same ; and for the sake of change must betake yourself into another life, which I am afraid is impossible.

CHIRON. What then, Menippus, is to be done ?

MENIPPUS. I see but one remedy, and that, to my knowledge, is nothing new : an intelligent man takes everything as it is, accommodates himself to it as he can, and holds nothing inevitable to be insupportable.

XXVII

DIOGENES, ANTISTHENES, CRATES, *and a
Beggars*

DIOGENES. Antisthenes and Crates, suppose, as we have nothing to do, we take a walk together towards the entrance, to see what new comers there are, and how they severally behave.

ANTISTH. With all my heart, Diogenes ; it will be an amusing spectacle to us, to observe how one bursts into tears, another, prostrate on the ground, intreats to be let go ; others again, obstinately refusing to advance, foolishly wrestle with Mercury, who is pushing them forward, or lying on their backs, are absolutely not by fair means to be moved from the spot.

CRATES. And on the way I will relate to you what passed at my own descent.

DIOGENES. Let us hear it, Crates ; I see by your looks that you have something very laughable to tell.

CRATES. Among a number of others who came down with me, the most considerable were

Ismenodorus, one of our wealthiest Thebans, and Arsaces, satrap of Media, and Oroetes the Armenian. Ismenodorus, who, on a journey to Eleusis, I think, in a hollow way near mount Cithæron, was murdered by robbers, sighed and groaned most piteously, holding his wounds together with both hands. He often called on his young children by name, and accused himself of fool-hardiness, for having set out upon a journey across Cithæron, and the parts about Eleutheræ, and taken with him only two servants, when he had to pass through a country so wasted by the late wars, especially as he had with him five golden cups and four large golden beakers. The satrap Arsaces, a man considerably advanced in years, of a noble presence, and tolerably benign aspect, testified his displeasure after the manner of his country. He was extremely angry at being obliged to go on foot, and ordered his horse to be fetched; for that was killed at the same time with himself, both having been transpierced by a thrust from a Thracian peltastis¹ in an engagement with the Cappadocians on the banks of the Araxes. Arsaces, as he told us himself, rushing with great impetuosity into the midst of the enemy, had advanced a long way before his troops, when the Thracian, who made a stand against him, having warded off the stroke of his lance with his semicircular shield, at the same

¹ A sort of foot soldiers, who were so denominated from their little semicircular shields.

instant thrust both him and his horse through with his long Macedonian spear.¹

ANTISTH. How could that be done at one thrust, Crates ?

CRATES. Very easily. The satrap ran upon him with his couched spear of twenty yards in length ; but the Thracian, as soon as he had parried the thrust with his buckler, so that the point of the lance passed on one side of him, planted himself on one knee, when couching his spear straight before the rider, rushing towards him at full speed, it entered the horse's breast ; and as the latter transpierced himself by the fury and violence with which he rushed on it, so it could not fail that Arsaces was stuck through the groin at the same time, and thus both at one stroke were stretched upon the grass. You perceive that it happened quite naturally, and was more the doing of the horse than of the Thracian. In the meantime the satrap was angry that he was put on the same footing with the rest, and would positively ride on horseback into the kingdom of the dead.—As for Orœtes, he in fact had much need of a horse, although he was not a man of such high quality as the former : for he was so infirm in his feet, that he was hardly able to stand upon the ground, much less to walk. This is the case with the Medes in general ; no sooner are they off their horses, than they totter

¹ Sarissa, a spear 14 to 16 yards in length, of the Macedonian infantry.

with difficulty on their tiptoes, as if they went upon thorns. As he therefore lay flat on his face, and all attempts to set him upon his legs were ineffectual, kind-hearted Mercury at last hoisted him on his shoulders and carried him into Charon's boat. I never can forbear laughing when I see him.

ANTISTH. When I took this journey I never consorted with the rest. I left them to howl as they would, ran before, was the first in the boat, and looked out for the best place. During the passage the others wept, and got the sea-sickness : while I had great diversion with them all.

DIOGENES. I likewise had a curious party when I came down ; the exchange-broker Blepsias, from the Piræus, Lampis from Acarnania, captain of the foreign mercenaries of his republic, and Damis, the rich old miser of Corinth, were my travelling companions. The last was poisoned by his own son ; Lampis cut his throat for love of the fair Myrtio, and of Blepsias it was reported that the poor devil starved himself to death : and really he looked quite tawny, and was nothing but skin and bone. Notwithstanding all these circumstances were previously known to me, I inquired of each of them, out of curiosity to hear what they would say, the manner of his death. Damis accused his wicked son. You are rightly served, said I : for a man of ninety, possessing property amounting to upwards of a million, and allows his son of eighteen only four-

pence a day to live upon, while he himself is swimming in luxury and superfluity, what better can such a one expect of his son? And you, master Acarnanian (for he too was sighing and groaning and wishing every curse to alight upon his mistress), why do you accuse love, and not rather yourself? Why does the man of courage who never trembles before an enemy and was always foremost in the fight, and exposed himself to the greatest dangers; why does he let himself be overcome by the false tears and the feigned love-sighs of the first little wench that comes in his way? With regard to Blepsias, he made himself such reproaches for his folly, that I had nothing to say to him. "What a block-head and fool I was," exclaimed he, "to imagine I should live for ever, and to scrape together and hoard up riches for heirs who were nothing to me!" You may figure to yourselves how pleasantly these fools shortened my time, and my journey, by their blubbering.—But we are now quite close to the mouth. Let us here stand still, that we may be able to observe the comers a great way off. There is a vast number of them, of all descriptions, and they are all weeping, except the new-born babes and infants; even the oldest greybeards are lamenting that they are carried off so prematurely! Incomprehensible! Would not one be tempted to believe this raging passion for life was inspired into them by a magical charm?—I will however put a question

or two to that very old man yonder.—Why do you weep so, good man? One would think you were old enough to come to us. You probably have been a king?

BEGGAR. Oh, no!

DIOGENES. But a satrap?

BEGGAR. Nor yet that.

DIOGENES. You were then very rich; and now it grieves you to be forced to leave your opulence, and your good cheer in death?

BEGGAR. Nothing of the sort. I was nearly ninety years old; I gained a sorrowful livelihood by my angling-rod, eked out my scanty pittance by a small matter in the way of alms, and was in want of every comfort, was childless, and, in addition to all this, lame and almost blind.

DIOGENES. And in such a condition could you wish longer to live?

BEGGAR. Yes surely! To behold the sunshine is still pleasant, and nothing is worse and more horrible than to be dead.

DIOGENES. You dote, old man. Our ferryman Charon, is scarce older than you, and you are squabbling with fate like a fellow of sixteen! What can we object against young people, when old men of ninety are so enamoured of life! They, who should eagerly long for death, as the only remedy against the troubles and hardships of age!—But, let us now turn about; lest we excite suspicion, as if we wanted to go through, if we are seen sauntering about the mouth of Orcus.

XXVIII

MENIPPUS AND TIRESIAS

MENIPPUS. Tiresias, a word or two with you ! You were blind, it is said ; that is a circumstance that no longer admits of investigation, since we have all vacant eyes, or rather empty holes in our heads instead of eyes, and therefore it cannot well be seen whether one was as blind as Phineus, or as lynx-sighted as Lynceus. But that you were a prophet, and had the advantage over all other men of having been at several times man and woman, I remember perfectly well to have heard from the poets. I pray you therefore, for every god's sake, tell me, in which sex you were the best off, in the male or in the female ?

TIRESIAS. As a woman it was very much better with me, Menippus. For the women have far less to do and to care for than the men. Besides, they reign with unbounded sway over the male sex, without being obliged to go to war, or to keep watch on the city-walls, or to bawl themselves hoarse in the popular assemblies, or to appear at the bar.

MENIPPUS. I perceive, Tiresias, that you have never heard how bitterly Medea in Euripides,¹ deplores the unhappy lot of women, and how intolerable they find the pains they have to go through in child-bearing. But, as the iambics of

¹ Vers. 230-51.

Medea have led me to it, had you ever a child, when a woman, or were you barren ?

TIRESIAS. Why do you want to know, Menippus?

MENIPPUS. It is of no consequence, Tiresias ; answer me only if you think proper.

TIRESIAS. I was not barren, and yet I never bare.

MENIPPUS. That is curious enough ; I would only know, whether you had a womb.

TIRESIAS. Certainly I had.¹

MENIPPUS. How came it then to pass, that you became a man ; did the transformation proceed gradually, and as it were imperceptibly, were your sexual parts obstructed, did your breasts disappear, and your virility gradually assert itself, or did it vanish suddenly and all at once.

TIRESIAS. I cannot see the drift of this question ? You seem not to believe that all this really happened to me.

MENIPPUS. It would indeed be a great impropriety not to believe such things, Tiresias ; one should adopt them like a good pious sheep, without critically examining whether they are even possible ; that is understood !

TIRESIAS. You believe then as little that Ædon was turned into a nightingale, Daphne into a laurel, and Calisto into a she-bear ?

MENIPPUS. If I should ever fall into company with those ladies, I shall hear what they say.

¹ For notes on change of sex in both Eastern and Western fiction, see Penzer, *Ocean of Story*, Vol. vii., pp. 227-33.

But my precious sir, did you prophesy, when you were a gentlewoman, as afterwards ? Or did you learn to play the part of a man and a prophet together ?

TIRESIAS. I see you absolutely know nothing of my history ; know not a word of my having been once called upon to settle a difference between Jupiter and Juno : have not heard that Juno, because my decision was not to her mind, deprived me of sight, but Jupiter to console me for the misfortune conferred on me the gift of prophecy.

MENIPPUS. How, Tiresias, do you here still preserve your old attachment to these lies ? In that however you only act like other prophets ; it is the general practice with you to say nothing to the purpose.

XXIX

AJAX AND AGAMEMNON

AGAMEMNON. Hear me, Ajax : ¹ if you in your madness murdered yourself and intended to do the like to us all, why do you complain of Ulysses ? Lately when he came down to have his fortune told, you did not once look at him, much less deign to speak a word to him, though he had

¹ The subject of this Dialogue is again taken from Homer's *Necromancy* (*Odyssey*, xi. ver. 542-63), and Homer is again the passive party.

been your comrade and good friend, but haughtily stalked by and took no notice of him.

AJAX. And that with good reason, Agamemnon ; for my madness was entirely owing to him ; by presuming to contend with me for the armour.

AGAMEMNON. How could you imagine you should meet with no antagonist, and carry the victory over us all without a struggle ?

AJAX. That I certainly might, on such an occasion ; for the whole armour of Achilles belonged of right to me, as he was the son of my father's brother.¹ None of you, who were far superior to Ulysses, laid any claim to it, nor wished to dispute with me the well-earnt spoils. Only the son of Laertes, whom I so often rescued when he was in danger of being cut down by the Phrygians, presumed to advance a right of superiority over me, and pretended to be worthier of the armour of Achilles than I was.

AGAMEMNON. Properly, my noble friend, you should throw the blame upon Thetis, who, instead of presenting to you the armour as an inheritance devolved on you from your cousin, she exposed it as a prize to whomsoever the Greeks should award it.

AJAX. By no means. My business is entirely with Ulysses, the only one who disputes it with me.

AGAMEMNON. It may however be pardoned him, Ajax, as a human frailty, if he suffered himself to

¹ Their fathers, Peleus and Telamon, were sons of Æacus.

be carried away by the passion for glory ; so pleasing, that there was not one of us, who for the sake of it would not abide the greatest perils : add to this, that the Trojans themselves acknowledged that he had the advantage over you.

AJAX. I know very well who that was¹ that condemned me ; it is not permitted to say all we could of the deities. But that I shall not hate Ulysses, is what I cannot consent to, Agamemnon, though Minerva herself should command it.

XXX

MINOS AND SOSTRATUS

MINOS. Let the highwayman Sostratus here be cast into the fire-stream ! That sacrilegious ruffian be torn piecemeal by the chimæra ! Stretch this tyrant with Tityus, Mercury, on the wheel, that the vulture may gnaw his liver ! But go, ye good, into the Elysian fields, there dwell in the islands of the blessed, as the reward of that integrity, which you have displayed in your lives.

SOSTRATUS. Hear, Minos, whether anything can be objected against the justice of what I have to offer.

MINOS. To what purpose hear you again ? Are

¹ Minerva to wit ; who on this occasion evidently shews her partiality for Ulysses.

you not convicted, Sostratus, of being a villain, and the murderer of so many people ?

SOSTRATUS. Convicted I am ; but whether I am justly punished, remains still to be made out.

MINOS. It has long ago been made out, or it must not be just that every one should receive what he has merited.

SOSTRATUS. At least, Minos, answer me a couple of short questions.

MINOS. Let us hear them. But be brief ; for I have more sentences to expedite.

SOSTRATUS. Whatever I have done in my life, did I do it of my own voluntary motion, or in pursuance of an irresistible decree of the goddess of fate ?

MINOS. In pursuance of the latter. That is self-evident.

SOSTRATUS. The good, therefore, as well as we villains, as we are styled, act in whatever we do, as servants of that goddess ?

MINOS. Clotho, that is to say : who at the birth of every individual ordains the actions of his life : certainly !

SOSTRATUS. Suppose now, one kills another, being obliged to it because he stands under the command of one whose will he cannot control, as is the case, for example, of the public executioner or of a satellite ; if the former receive the order for it from the criminal judge, the latter from the tyrant : whom will you make responsible for the murder ?

MINOS. Unquestionably the judge or the tyrant ; the sword certainly not ; for that is simply an instrument, employed at the will of him who is properly guilty of the deed.

SOSTRATUS. Excellent, Minos ; I thank you for the addition to my similitude. If therefore a servant brings to me a sum of money, with which his master has sent him to me, which of the two must I set down in my memorandum book, as my benefactor ?

MINOS. Naturally him who sent you the money ; for the other, who brought it, acted only as servant.

SOSTRATUS. Do not you perceive therefore how unjust it is in you to punish us, who, as servants of Clotho, have done what she commanded us, and to reward those for the good which they administered in her name ? For, that it could be possible for them to avoid what is imposed on us by an unconditional necessity, is what no man perhaps will maintain.

MINOS. My good Sostratus ; if you go so nicely to work, you might easily discover, that many other things occur in the world which do not exactly chime with reason. In the meantime, you have convinced me by your questions, at least that you are as great a reasoner as a highwayman ; and it shall be no detriment to you. Unbind him, Mercury, and let him go free.—But you, take heed, that you do not teach the other dead such questions.

THE FERRY, OR THE TYRANT



THE FERRY, OR THE TYRANT

CHARON CLOTHO MERCURY CYNISCUS
 MEGAPENTHES MICYLLUS *Some others*
of the Dead TISIPHONE RHADAMANTHUS

CHARON. Most willingly, Clotho! my boat has been ready this good while, and in the best trim for the passage; the bilgewater is pumped out, the mast reared, the sail spread, and the oars tight lashed. Nothing is wanting on my part to prevent us from weigh-

THE FERRY. A little Aristophanic drama, the scene of which lies in the subterranean world; and the contrast between the state into which (on the supposition that the personality of us continues) death naturally and necessarily transplants a wicked king and a harmless beggar, forms the

ing anchor and departing immediately. Only Mercury, who ought to have been here long ago, detains us ; we are in want of passengers, you see : if he had brought them down we might have made three trips to-day ; as it is, the evening is far advanced before we have taken a farthing. I know very well that Pluto will think it all owing to my neglect, when the blame is due to another. For certain our gallant captain of the dead has been drinking a cup of Lethean wine there above, and forgot to come back to us ; or he is amusing himself somewhere in wrestling with any young fellows he meets, or in playing on the cithara, or acting the orator and dealing out his long-winded jokes. Perhaps the noble youth on his way may have found something to pilfer ; for that is likewise one of his seven liberal arts. He takes great liberties with us, since one half of him is in our service !

CLOTHO. How do you know, Charon, but there may be another reason of his detention, and

principal subject. The vivacity of the representation, and the interest which Lucian by his native genius and humour has the art of communicating even to the tritest *lieux communs*, qualify this piece for a place among his best performances. As it is a conversation carried on partly by deities and partly by the dead, it unites the character and consequence of both descriptions—delicate ridicule of idle popular conceits, without making wry mouths himself—and practical lessons of prudence, while he appears to have nothing in view but to entertain his reader with a tale of the other world.



CHARON'S FERRY

Jupiter perhaps may have occasion for him longer than usual in his affairs with the upper world. For he, you know, is likewise his master.

CHARON. But his right does not extend so far, as to employ a common servant beyond his proper time ! We do not detain him, when it is his duty to be gone. However I know very well where the fault lies. With us there is nothing but asphodel-flowers and libations of thin honey-wine, and insipid wafers and meagre oblations to the dead. But in heaven all is gay and smiling, and ambrosia and nectar go jovially round. It is quite natural to let himself be detained there. From us he is always in haste to run away, as if out of a prison, as fast as he can : but when it is time to come down, then he has always somewhat to do, he marches deliberately step by step, and we have reason to be glad if he comes at last.

CLOTHO. Leave off your scolding, Charon ; here he comes you see, bringing with him a good number of people, or rather driving them before him with his rod, in a troop, like a flock of goats.—But what is that ? One of them is bound, another comes laughing along, another again has a large wallet hanging across his shoulders and a cudgel in his hand. The fellow has a terribly crabbed look, and is continually beating the others, to make them go faster. And do not you see how Mercury is all over dripping with sweat, how dusty his feet are, and how he puffs and blows and can hardly fetch his breath ?—What is the meaning

of all this, Mercury ? Why in such a hurry ? You are surely out of your wits !

MERCURY. Enough to make me so, Clotho, as I have been obliged to run so long after this straggler, that I began to be afraid that I should not get sight of your boat to-day.

CLOTHO. Where is he then ; and what made him run away ?

MERCURY. That is easily guessed ; he had much rather have continued to live. He is some king or prince, as well as I was able to make out by his cries and lamentations, about the great felicity of which he says he was deprived.

CLOTHO. And the silly creature thought to run away, as if he could continue to live, when the thread I had spun for him was run out !

MERCURY. He wanted to run away, say you ? I assure you, if this honest man with the cudgel here had not helped me to fetch him in and to bind him, he would have been by this time beyond our reach. For from the moment that Atropos delivered him into my hands, he has struggled and lagged behind the whole way, or planted himself with his feet so fixed to the ground, that it was with great difficulty I could drag him along. Sometimes he threw himself on his knees before me, and fervently entreated me, under great promises, only to let him go for a short time. I naturally was inflexible, as he requested what was utterly impossible. When however we were arrived at the mouth, and I, according to custom,

began to call over the dead I had brought with me, to Æacus, who compared and numbered them by the billet which your sister had sent him, he discovered that the cursed rascal, I cannot tell how, had found an opportunity to steal from our view and get clear off. We now running over the account again, discovered that one of the dead was wanting. Upon this, Æacus, knitting his brows, and frowning severely at me, began to charge me with having privily connived at the escape. "Your dexterity in stealing is not everywhere properly applied," said he; "in heaven you may carry on such sport as much as you will, but in the concerns of the kingdom of the dead everything is attended to with regularity and exactitude, and we cannot be imposed upon. Here in the billet you see stand a thousand and four, and you bring me one short; or perhaps you will pretend to say that Atropos has misreckoned." Confounded at hearing this imputation, I presently recollected what had happened on the way; I looked round, and not perceiving that fellow, I concluded that he had given me the slip, and instantly pursued him on the road, that leads back into daylight. This honest man here followed me of his own accord; we ran as if for a wager, and seized our fugitive just when he had reached Tænarus; so near was he to getting clear away from us.

CLOTHO. And all this while, Charon, we were blaming Mercury for his supposed negligence!

CHARON. But why do we trifle our time away now ; as if we had not had delays enough already ?

CLOTHO. Very true ; let them get on board. I will, as usual, with my diary in my hand, sit on the ship's ladder and examine each of them separately as he enters, who he is, whence he comes, and what was the cause of his death. Do you, Mercury, range and assort them properly. But first of all, throw in these new-born babes ; for what answers are they able to give me ?

MERCURY. See here, ferryman ; three hundred of them in number, including the exposed and deserted.

CHARON. Oh dear, a bad haul ! a precious cargo you have brought us, Mercury of unripe fruit !

MERCURY. Now, Clotho, shall we throw in the unlamented into one heap with the former ?

CLOTHO. The aged do you mean ? Well ; do so if you will : for why should I give myself the trouble to dive so deep into ancient history ? — Let all those come on, who are past sixty ! What is the matter ? Are they all so deaf with age, that they do not hear me ? You had best hoist them in all together ; they are so weak upon their legs.

MERCURY. Here are four hundred of them, less two, all ripe and mellow, and plucked in due season !

CLOTHO. That I will vouch for ! They are all as shrunk and shrivelled up as dried grapes.—

Bring up now those, Mercury, who died of their wounds !—But, in the first place tell me, what is the cause of your being here ?—However, the shorter way will be to review them by the billet. Yesterday in Media fourscore and three of them were to be killed in battle, and among them Gobaris the son of Oxyartes.

MERCURY. Here they are.

CLOTHO. Seven have made away with themselves for love, and the philosopher Theagenes for the sake of a courtesan.

MERCURY. Here !

CLOTHO. Where are the two who slew one another on account of a throne ?

MERCURY. There they stand.

CLOTHO. And a certain person, who was murdered by his wife and her gallant ?

MERCURY. There, close to you.

CLOTHO. Bring next, those who died by due course of law, them that were scourged to death, the impaled, the crucified. And where are the sixteen that were murdered by highwaymen ?

MERCURY. These in such a mangled condition are they.—Is it your pleasure that I should bring the women together with them ?

CLOTHO. Oh yes ; and those who perished by shipwreck, because they all died together and in the same manner. And those who died of a burning fever, with their physician Agathocles.—But where then is the philosopher Cyniscus, who was forced to die of eating so many Hecate-

meals and lustral-eggs, and in addition to them at last even devoured a cuttle-fish raw ?

CYNISCUS. I have been waiting for you a long while, best Clotho. In what have I offended, that you have left me such a terrible long time there above ? Verily you have almost filled your whole distaff with my twine. I was so satiated with life that I have frequently attempted to snap the thread ; but, I know not how it came about, it absolutely would not break.

CLOTHO. I left you to be an inspector and physician of human follies. But now go aboard, and welcome !

CYNISCUS. Not, by Hercules ! till we have seen this bound man embarked. I am afraid he will soften you by his prayers.

CLOTHO. Who is he then ?

MERCURY. The tyrant Megapcncthes, the son of Lacydes.

CLOTHO. Mount on board.

MEGAP. Oh, not yet, most mighty sovereign Clotho ! Let me go back for a little while to the upper world ! I will return of my own accord without further summons.

CLOTHO. And why do you wish to go back ?

MEGAP. Only to finish my house, which I have half built.

CLOTHO. Nonsense ! Come, step in.

MEGAP. I ask for no long time, O Parca ; let me remain at least but for a single day, that I may give directions to my wife respecting my property,

and describe to her the place where I have interred much treasure.

CLOTHO. The decree is gone forth. Your prayers are ineffectual.

MEGAP. And is such a hoard of gold to be lost ?

CLOTHO. Give yourself no trouble about that ; your cousin Megacles will find it.

MEGAP. Scandalous ! What ! my bitterest enemy, whom from mere cowardice I did not send out of the world before me !

CLOTHO. Even he ; and he will survive you upwards of forty years, and appropriate to himself your concubines, your fine clothes and all your riches.

MEGAP. That is unjust of you, Clotho, to bestow my possessions on my most inveterate enemy.

CLOTHO. How ? Did not you yourself act in the same manner ? Did not you appropriate to yourself all the estate of your predecessor Cydimachus, after having killed him and slain his children before his dying eyes ?

MEGAP. Now however it was mine.

CLOTHO. The term of your possession is run out, as you see.

MEGAP. Lend me your ear, Clotho ; I have somewhat to say to you in private. You others withdraw for an instant. If you will connive at my escape, I promise you, that I will deliver into your hands this day a thousand talents of coined gold.

CLOTHO. Foolish fellow ! Your head then is still stuffed with gold and talents.

MEGAP. Moreover, if you require it, I will add to this two golden goblets which I got by the murder of Cleocritus, both of the purest gold, and each of a hundred talents weight.

CLOTHO. Shove him into the boat ! He seems as if he never would come willingly.

MEGAP. I take you all to witness the injustice that is done me. The wall and the magazine for ship-stores now remain unfinished ; if I could have lived but five days longer they would have been completed.

CLOTHO. Never mind it : another will finish them.

MEGAP. But what I now request is, you must own, extremely reasonable.

CLOTHO. And what may it be ?

MEGAP. Only to live till I have subdued the Pisidians, imposed a tribute on the Lydians, and raised to myself a stately and sumptuous monument, with an engraved inscription recording the several great and royal achievements that I have performed in my lifetime.

CLOTHO. Why, instead of a day, you require at once twenty years !

MEGAP. I am ready to bring sureties for my speedy return ; nay, if you please, I will in the meantime send you my only son as a hostage !

CLOTHO. You wicked wretch ! And while you

were above you so often prayed the gods that he might outlive you !

MEGAP. I did so formerly : but now I have learnt to understand the value of life better.

CLOTHO. You will see your son here himself in a little while ; the present ruler will dispatch him.

MEGAP. This however you will not deny me, good Parca !

CLOTHO. Well ; what ?

MEGAP. I should be glad to see how my affairs go on at home.

CLOTHO. That you shall learn, and you will have but bad reason to rejoice. Your wife will fall to the lot of Midas, who has been of a long time her gallant.

MEGAP. The damned rascal, to whom I gave his freedom, at her intercession !

CLOTHO. Your daughters are now parcelled with the present king's concubines, and all the statues and busts, that were formerly set up to you at the public expense, are broke to pieces and an object of derision to the passers-by.

MEGAP. What ! and my friends see all this calmly ? Does no one of them take fire at it, and resent the indignity ?

CLOTHO. Who then should be your friend ; and for what reason ? You are therefore ignorant, that all those people, who bowed to the earth before you, and found excellent whatever you said and did, did it merely from fear or hope,

only hung their cloak to the wind, and were the friends, not of Megapenthes, but of the prince ?

MEGAP. And at the banquets I gave them, their first care always was to present a libation to my health, and, with great acclamation, to wish me all possible happiness ! There was not one, who was not ready to die in my stead, if it came to that ; in short they had no other oath than by my life !

CLOTHO. And as a proof of their sincerity you lost it yesterday when feasting with one of them. The last cup that was handed to you sent you hither.

MEGAP. That then was the reason of its tasting so bitter ? But why did he do it ?

CLOTHO. No unnecessary questions. It is time to get in.

MEGAP. I have only one thing at my heart, which lies peculiarly heavy, and on account whereof I wish I could once more obtain a peep into daylight.

CLOTHO. That must surely be somewhat of an extraordinary nature. What is it ?

MEGAP. Cario, one of my slaves, as soon as he heard I was dead, late in the evening stole into the apartment where I lay, and where my concubine Glycerion quite alone was watching by my corpse. Finding the opportunity so favourable, and thinking there was nobody near, he took possession of the girl, with whom, as I perceived,

she must have long lived on the same familiar footing. After the scoundrel had satisfied his desire, he looked back to me, and said : “ There, take that, you damned rascal, for the blows you have so often given me for nothing ! ” And with that he twitched me by the beard, gave me slaps on the chops till he was tired, then hawking up as much phlegm as he could, he spat in my face, sent me packing to all the devils, and out he went. I was ready to burst with rage, but could do nothing to the villain ; for I was already cold and stiff. But the cursed wench, as soon as she heard people coming, wetted her eyes with spittle, as if she had been weeping over my corpse, and with cries and tender ejaculations of my name, went out of the room. Oh, if I could but catch them both !

CLOTHO. Spare these threats, and walk in ! It is time you should be brought to the bar.

MEGAP. And who dares presume to sit in judgment on a sovereign ?

CLOTHO. On a sovereign, nobody. But on the dead, Rhadamanthus ; whom you will presently get sight of, and then find that he judges every one with the strictest justice according to his deserts. Detain us no longer !

MEGAP. If you will, make of me only a vulgar poor man, dearest Parca, only a slave ! I will cheerfully be no longer a king—let me but live again !

CLOTHO. Where is he with the cudgel ?—

Mercury, drag him in by the legs, since he will not come in of himself.

MERCURY. Come along, you runagate ! March ! —You, Charon, take him in, and this stout companion here, with him ! And for security sake let the tyrant be lashed to the mast.

MEGAP. The principal seat of right belongs to me.

CLOTHO. And why so ?

MEGAP. By Hercules, because I was a reigning prince, and had ten thousand satellites.

CLOTHO. And did not Cario serve you right, in plucking such a brutal fellow as you by the beard ? But the cudgel here, if you come to taste it, will sadly embitter your sovereignty !

MEGAP. What ? Shall such a chap as Cyniscus dare to lift up his stick against me ? It was but lately, when you took the liberty to argue with me, that I was within a hair of nailing you to the cross.

CYNISCUS. In return for it you shall now be nailed to the mast.

MICYLLUS. If I may be so bold, Clotho, is then one of us to be reckoned for nothing by you, and must I, because only a poor man, be the last to be shipped ?

CLOTHO. Who are you then ?

MICYLLUS. The cobbler Micyllus.

CLOTHO. And you think yourself aggrieved in being withheld so long from us ? You have heard how much the tyrant promised to give us,

only for a little respite : and yet delay is unwellcome to you !

MICYLLUS. I will tell you honestly what I mean, most excellent of the Parcæ. In my view of things it was a sorry favour, when the Cyclops promised Ulysses that he would devour him the last ;¹ for, whether I am the first or last, the same teeth await me. Besides, the case between me and the rich folks is extremely different. Their life and my life are diametrically opposite to one another. The tyrant thought himself happy ; he stood in high respect, was dreaded by all men, and had a quantity of gold and silver, fine clothes, excellent horses, a sumptuous table, comely lads and beautiful women, which he must leave behind : it is quite natural therefore that he should repine at being torn away from them. I cannot tell how it happens, but it is as if the soul stuck fast to these things as a bird to a lime-twig, and cannot from long habit be easily separated from them ; they are bonds which are drawn the closer the longer they are worn, and the captives are so enured to them, that they break out into loud lamentations when they are violently delivered from their bondage. However insolent before, as soon as they are to set out upon this journey to the lower world, their heart

¹ *Odyssey*, ix. 369. Where Ulysses calls himself, "Οὔτις, Nobody, and Polyphemus tells him :

When all the wretched crew have felt my power,
Noman shall be the last I will devour.

is ready to break ; they turn about, like a forsaken lover, with longing looks to what they have left behind, and wish, were it only from afar, to have one more glimpse of daylight ;¹ as this fool does, who even attempted on the road to make his escape, and now fatigues you with his unavailing prayers for a release. Whereas I, who had neither fields nor tenements and premises, nor cash, nor household stuff, nor posts of honour, nor family pictures, to leave behind in the world, was immediately ready to depart. At the first beck of Atropos I threw down my paring-knife and the unfinished buskin I had in my hand, leaped up with joy, barefoot as I was, without even staying to wash my hands from the wax, and followed, or rather ran before, always looking forwards, because I had left nothing that could call me back, or induce me only to turn my head. And truly, as far as I perceive, everything among you pleases me passing well, and particularly the equality here introduced is very much to my taste. I suppose no debtor is here dunned by his creditors ; probably with you no more taxes or rates are to be paid, and, what is best of all, I imagine I am here safe from perishing with cold in the winter, nor shall

¹ The cobbler Micyllus, we see, likes to hear himself talk, as can be observed in another of Lucian's works, *The Cock*. In the exercise of this talent perhaps the Grecian shoemakers may have been the prototypes of our modern sons of St Crispin.

be liable to sickness, nor get cuffs from my superiors. Here all is peace and quietness, and a world completely turned upside down : we poor folks laugh here, while the rich grieve and lament.

CLOTHO. I observe, Micyllus, that you have been exceedingly merry this good while. But what is it that moves your laughter most ?

MICYLLUS. That I will tell you, O most revered of all the goddesses ! Because, there above, I lived near the tyrant, which gave me the opportunity of narrowly watching all that passed with him ; and when I beheld him stalking about in his shining purple robe, and took notice of the number of servants, that walked behind him, and the quantity of gold in his palace, the drink-vessels beset with precious stones, and the numerous sofas with silver feet, and especially when the flavour of the many costly dishes, that were prepared for his table, stung my nose : then it appeared evident to me that he was more than a mere man, and the happiest and most glorious of beings. Oft, when I have seen him solemnly strutting about and swollen with state, and all who approached were put out of countenance, he appeared to be much more beautiful and great than he really was, and at least an ell taller than all other men. But since he is dead, and despoiled of all this pomp and finery, I find that he is a most ridiculous little fellow ; but still more am I forced to laugh at my own

simplicity, that I could have so much respect for such a ragamuffin, and estimate his happiness by the fumes of his kitchen, and admire him because his garment was tintured with the blood of the murex.¹ At last, however, when the money-scrivener Gniphio attracted my attention, when I beheld how the poor creature sobbed and sighed, and repented that he had not enjoyed his wealth, but was removed out of the world without having tasted it, in order to leave all his goods and chattels to the spendthrift Rhodocharis, who, as the next of kin, was his intestate heir :—then I could no longer cease from laughing, on recollecting how pale and dirty the man always looked, how his brow was contracted with trouble and care, and how all he had of his riches consisted in counting of his thousands and tens of thousands contained in his money-bags, and with incessant toil scraping together piece by piece, what the lucky Rhodocharis will in a short time let fly by handfuls.—But why do not we put off from the shore ? We might take the rest on board while under weigh. The crew will not let us want subject for laughter.

CLOTHO. Get in then, that the bargeman may weigh anchor.

CHARON. Hollo, you ; whither so fast ? The boat is already full. You may tarry where you

¹ The murex, a species of shell-fish, called also the purple-fish, from which was extracted the dye of that colour. Plin. *Nat. Hist.* ix. 36. Arist. *Hist. Anim.* v. cap. 15.

are ; early to-morrow morning we will give you a cast over.

MICYLLUS. It is not fair, Charon, to leave me behind, as ever since yesterday I have been a corpse. I will complain of you to Rhadamanthus, for not better minding the regulations.—Lackaday ; they are gone every mother's son, and left me here alone.—But why may I not swim after them ? Since I am once dead, I have no need to fear drowning. Besides, I have not a halfpenny to pay the fare.

CLOTHO. What are you about ? Stop, Micyllus ! It is against the law to go over after that fashion.

MICYLLUS. I shall perhaps be over on the other side before you.

CLOTHO. No, no, that will not do. We must lay to and take him in. Pull him in, Mercury.

CHARON. And where is he to sit ? You see that we are everywhere as full as we can hold.

MERCURY. If you like we can hoist him on the shoulders of the tyrant.

CLOTHO. An excellent thought, Mercury ! Mount therefore and bestride the caitiff's neck.—Now, off we go, and a good voyage to us !

CYNISCUS. It is best, Charon, to tell you the plain truth at once : I cannot pay a halfpenny for my passage : for besides this pouch and my staff, I have nothing in the world. If you will, however, I am ready to lend a hand at pumping or rowing. Give me but a stout oar, and you shall see that I can manage it !

CHARON. Row away then ! I am satisfied that you will earn your passage-money.

CYNISCUS. Shall I give you a song, to cheer the rowers ?

CHARON. Oh yes ; if you know a clever seaman's song.

CYNISCUS. More than one, Charon.—But do you hear how these wretches join the chorus with their crying and howling ? It will form a charming concert.

A PASSENGER. Alas, my treasure !

ANOTHER. Oh, my fine estate ! Who will take care of my grapes and the vineyard that I planted last year ?

ANOTHER. Ah me, ah me, the excellent house that I have left !

ANOTHER. Oh, how will my prodigal heir idly squander what he gets from me.

ANOTHER. Hu ! hu ! my poor little ones !

MERCURY. Micyllus, have you then alone nothing to weep for ? It absolutely is not proper that anybody here should go over with dry eyes.

MICYLLUS. Let me alone, Mercury ; I have nothing to bewail, so we have but a good passage.

MERCURY. Sigh only a little bit, that we may not break an old custom.

MICYLLUS. Well, since you will have it so, Mercury, I will howl.—“ Oh, my straps ! Oh, my old slippers ! Alas, alas, my worn-out soles ! Wretched man that I am, I shall never more sit without victuals from morn till night, nor in

winter walk about without shoes and half naked, and my teeth chattering with cold ! Who will get possession of my paring-knife and my awl ? ” Now I think you have had a very handsome lamentation.—We are almost at the end of our trip.

CHARON. Now, in the first place, let every one pay his fare.—You, and you, and you !—Have all paid ?—Give your halfpenny also, Micyllus.

MICYLLUS. You joke, Charon ; or if you are in earnest so much the worse ! You may just as well attempt to milk a wooden cow,¹ as to squeeze a halfpenny out of me. In all my days I have never known whether a halfpenny is round or square.

CHARON. Verily the profits of this day’s voyage are soon counted !—Get out, that I may fetch on board the horses, oxen, dogs and the other animals ; for they must also be transported.

CLOTHO. Do you, Mercury, take charge of these, and conduct them onward : I shall row back to the other shore, bring over the Seresian princes Indopathes and Heramithres, who are slain in a contest about their borders.

MERCURY. Come, move forward, my masters ! or rather march in proper order behind me.

MICYLLUS. By Hercules ! How dark it is here ! Where is now the fair Megillus ? Or whereby could one here discern whether Phryne or Symmiche is the handsomest ? Everything here is

¹ Literally “you write in the sand if you expect an obol of Micyllus.”

of one colour, nothing is either fair or fairer, and even my wretched rusty cloak, which I myself lately thought past wearing, is now of as much consequence as the purple robe of a king ; beneath the covering of this darkness they are both alike invisible.—Where are you, Cyniscus ?

CYNISCUS. Here I am, Micyllus.—Here, I say—if you please we will walk on together.

MICYLLUS. Well thought of ! give me your hand.—Hear me, Cyniscus ; since you have been initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, do not you discover a great similarity between things here and there ?

CYNISCUS. You are not much out in your conjecture.—Only look, yonder comes somewhat like a female torchbearer, of a terrific and menacing aspect ! May it not perhaps be an Erinnyes ?

MICYLLUS. By her costume one would think so.

MERCURY. [*To Tisiphone.*] Here, I deliver to you these thousand and four, Tisiphone.

TISIPHONE. Radamanthus has been waiting for you this good while.

RHADAMANTHUS. Bring them up, Erinnyes—and you, Mercury, arraign them at the bar.

CYNISCUS. O Rhadamanthus, I conjure you by your father,¹ let me be the first that shall be examined.

RHADAMANTHUS. And wherefore ?

CYNISCUS. I am determined to accuse somebody of several misdemeanours, committed by him in

¹ Jupiter, whose son by Europa Rhadamanthus was.

his lifetime, and which are come to my knowledge. Now I cannot deliver a credible testimony, till it is first known who I am, and how I have lived.

RHADAM. And who are you then ?

CYNISCUS. Cyniscus, right worshipful ! my designation a philosopher.

RHADAM. Come forward then, and take your trial first. You, Mercury, call his accusers.

MERCURY. Whoever has anything to allege against this Cyniscus, let him come forth !

RHADAM. Nobody appears. That however is not sufficient, Cyniscus. Take off your clothes, that I may examine your brands.

CYNISCUS. How should I have any brands upon me ?

RHADAM. As many evil deeds as a man commits in his lifetime, so often, in a manner imperceptible, is he stigmatised in his soul.

CYNISCUS. Here am I as naked as you can require : look out now for the scars you speak of.

RHADAM. He is actually quite clear, to a few little faint blemishes, which are hardly discernible. But stay ; here are some traces that seem to be the remains of old burns, but by some means or other they have been effaced or scraped out. How comes this, Cyniscus ? How have you contrived to become so clear ?

¹ Plato in his *Gorgias* has a story to this purpose, which is imitated by Claudian, in *Ruffin*, lib. ii.

Quid demens manifesta negas ? En pectus inustæ
Deformant maculæ.

CYNISCUS. I will tell you how. There was a time, that for want of sound notions and right principles, I was good for little, and during that period I contracted many stains : but after I began to philosophise, all these spots were presently effaced from my soul.

RHADAM. You applied an excellent remedy, good friend. Therefore, when you have brought the charge against the tyrant you mentioned, you may depart into the islands of the blessed, there to consort with the best of mankind.—Mercury, call up another.

MICYLLUS. My examination will not take up much time. I have been standing already a good while naked before you ; I shall be dispatched in an instant.

RHADAM. Who are you ?

MICYLLUS. The cobbler Micyllus.

RHADAM. Well done, Micyllus, you are as clear as a blank sheet of paper ! You may go on with Cyniscus.—Now usher in the tyrant, Mercury.

MERCURY. Megapenthes, the son of Lacydes, come into court !—Whither are you going ? This way !—It is you, tyrant, I am calling. Tisiphone, haul him in by force, since he is not inclined to come in of himself ! And you, Cyniscus, let us hear what you have to lay to this man's charge : here he is, face to face.

CYNISCUS. Though there is no need to employ many words on this occasion, since you will presently discover by his scars, what sort of a

creature he is, I will nevertheless contribute what I can to represent him in his true colours. Passing over then the enormities he committed in his private capacity, I shall observe to you, that since he collected together a pack of adherents, that were ready for everything, and with their assistance and a gang of desperate ruffians, who represented his satellites, set himself up as the arbitrary sovereign of the republic, he has caused to be put to death more than ten thousand persons without verdict of law ; and the immense riches which he artfully obtained by the confiscation of their property, he has lavished in all imaginable kinds of licentiousness and debauchery. His unfortunate citizens he harassed with the most cruel oppressions ; he violated their virgins, corrupted their sons, and, intoxicated with power, trampled on all beneath him. For his acts of arrogance, insolence, and oppression, his haughty disdain of every man that was obliged to speak to him, it is impossible adequately to punish him. Sooner might one gaze at the midday sun, than dare to look him stedfastly in the face. And who is able to enumerate the new torments and modes of death invented by him, and from which his most intimate familiars were not safe ! As a proof that this is no malicious slander or idle calumny, you need only call in those whom he has murdered. Look, however, without being called they are here ! You see how they surround and torture

him. All these, O Rhadamanthus, were cut off by the hand of this execrable wretch ; some because they had beautiful wives ; others because they would not patiently brook the dishonouring of their children ; others because they had property ; others again because they were persons of eminent ability and virtue, and too wise and too good to approve his proceeding.

RHADAM. What answer do you put in to this, culprit ?

MEGAP. The murders I deny not ; but all the rest, all the atrocities that Cyniscus accuses me of are pure calumnies.¹

CYNISCUS. Shall I therefore call witnesses to these facts, Rhadamanthus ?

RHADAM. What witnesses can they be ?

CYNISCUS. His lamp and his bed. Both know enough of them for being able to bear testimony against him.

MERCURY. The lamp and the bed of Megapenthes, come into court, and make your appearance !²—They do not keep us long waiting. Here they are !

¹ The murders he confesses, because the murdered folks present testify against him, and he therefore cannot deny them : but the private acts of infamy he denies, because he trusted they could not convict him of them for want of evidence.

² A personification in the true oriental taste. In the fictions of the Eastern poets not only what to us are inanimate natural substances, but even the works of human art have souls, understanding and speech.

RHADAM. Tell then what you know of this Megapenthes. Let bed speak first.

THE BED. All that Cyniscus has accused him of is true, gracious lord Rhadamanthus. To say more I am ashamed.

RHADAM. This silence is the strongest evidence against him. Now, lamp, what say you ?

THE LAMP. What he may have done by day I know not, because then I was not present ; but how he spent his nights, I would fain be excused from relating—suffice it to say, that I was obliged to witness many scandalous transactions and transcendent enormities. How oft have I forbore to drink my oil, in hopes to become extinct ! but he forced me to enlighten his abominations beside him, and polluted my light in all imaginable ways.

RHADAM. No more witnesses need be called. Now strip yourself of your purple, that I may examine the number of your scars.—Heavens ! he is all black and blue, covered over and over with brand-marks.—What punishment shall we inflict upon him ? Shall we throw him into the fire-stream, or deliver him up to Cerberus ?

CYNISCUS. By your leave, I will propose a novel and condign punishment for him.

RHADAM. I will thank you for it : speak.

CYNISCUS. It is ever the custom, I think, for all the dead to drink the water of Lethe ?

RHADAM. It is so.

CYNISCUS. He alone therefore shall drink none

of it. Let the constant recollection of what he was there above, and the perpetually recurring ideas of his former power and of the delights in which he wallowed, be his severest punishment.

RHADAM. I perfectly agree with you. This therefore shall be his sentence ! Lead him hence, bind him near to Tantalus, and leave him the recollection of his past life.

